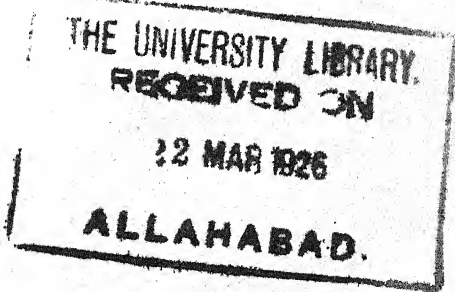




THE
TWENTIETH VOLUME
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS;
CONTAINING
THE THIRD VOLUME OF
DRYDEN'S MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



VOL. XX.



DRYDEN'S TALES

AND

TRANSLATIONS.

VOL. XX.

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T O

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ORMOND.

MY LORD,

Anno 1699.

SOME estates are held in England, by paying a fine at the change of every lord: I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this present day. I have dedicated the translation of the lives of Plutarch to the first Duke; and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father. Though I am very short of the age of Nestor, yet I have lived to a third generation of your house; and by your Grace's favour am admitted still to hold from you by the same tenure.

I am not vain enough to boast that I have deserved the value of so illustrious a line; but my fortune is the greater, that for three descents they have been pleased to distinguish my poems from those of other men; and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to say, That as your grandfather and father were cherished and adorned with honours by two successive monarchs, so I have been esteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the son, descended from one of the most ancient, most conspicuous, and most deserving families in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payment of my last fine, when it was due by your Grace's accession to the

titles and patrimonies of your house, I may seem, in rigour of law, to have made a forfeiture of my claim; yet my heart has always been devoted to your service: and since you have been graciously pleased, by your permission of this address, to accept the tender of my duty, it is not yet too late to lay these volumes at your feet.

The world is sensible that you worthily succeed, not only to the honours of your ancestors, but also to their virtues. The long chain of magnanimity, courage, easiness of access, and desire of doing good even to the prejudice of your fortune, is so far from being broken in your Grace, that the precious metal yet runs pure to the newest link of it: which I will not call the last, because I hope and pray, it may descend to late posterity: and your flourishing youth, and that of your excellent Dutchess, are happy omens of my wish.

It is observed by Livy and by others, that some of the noblest Roman families retained a resemblance of their ancestry, not only in their shapes and features, but also in their manners, their qualities, and the distinguishing characters of their minds: some lines were noted for a stern, rigid virtue, savage, haughty, parsimonious, and unpopular: others were more sweet, and affable; made of a more pliant paste, humble, courteous, and obliging; studious of doing charitable offices, and diffusive of the goods which they enjoyed. The last of these is the proper and indelible character of your Grace's family. God Almighty has endued you with a softness, a beneficence, an attractive behaviour

viour winning on the hearts of others; and so sensible of their misery, that the wounds of fortune seem not inflicted on them, but on yourself. You are so ready to redress, that you almost prevent their wishes, and always exceed their expectations: as if what was yours, was not your own, and not given you to possess, but to bestow on wanting merit. But this is a topic which I must cast in shades, lest I offend your modesty, which is so far from being ostentatious of the good you do, that it blushes even to have it known: and therefore I must leave you to the satisfaction and testimony of your own conscience, which though it be a silent panegyric, is yet the best.

You are so easy of access, that Poplicola was not more, whose doors were opened on the outside to save the people even the common civility of asking entrance; where all were equally admitted; where nothing that was reasonable was denied; where misfortune was a powerful recommendation, and where (I can scarce forbear saying) that want itself was a powerful mediator, and was next to merit.

The history of Peru assures us, that their Incas, above all their titles, esteemed that the highest, which called them Lovers of the poor: a name more glorious than the Felix, Pius, and Augustus of the Roman emperors; which were epithets of flattery, deserved by few of them; and not running in a blood like the perpetual gentleness, and inherent goodness of the Ormond Family.

Gold, as it is the purest, so it is the softest, and most ductile of all metals: iron, which is the hardest, gathers rust, corrodes itself; and is therefore subject to corruption: it was never intended for coins and medals, or to bear faces and the inscriptions of the great. Indeed it is fit for armour, to bear off insults, and preserve the wearer in the day of battle: but the danger once repelled, it is laid aside by the brave, as a garment too rough for civil conversation: a necessary guard in war, but too harsh and cumbersome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reason, my lord, though you have courage in an heroic degree, yet I ascribe it to you, but as your second attribute: mercy, beneficence, and compassion, claim precedence, as they are first in the divine nature. An intrepid courage, which is inherent in your Grace, is at best but a holiday kind of virtue, to be seldom exercised, and never but in cases of necessity: affability, mildness, tenderness, and a word, which I would fain bring back to its original signification of virtue, I mean Good-nature, are of daily use: they are the bread of mankind, and staff of life: neither sighs, nor tears, nor groans, nor curses of the vanquished, follow acts of compassion, and of charity: but a sincere pleasure and serenity of mind, in him who performs an action of mercy, which cannot suffer the misfortunes of another, without redress; lest they should bring a kind of contagion along with them, and pollute the happiness which he enjoys.

Yet

Yet since the perverse tempers of mankind, since oppression on one side, and ambition on the other, are sometimes the unavoidable occasions of war; that courage, that magnanimity, and resolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended: and here it grieves me that I am scanted in the pleasure of dwelling on many of your actions: but *αἰδέσθαι Τρώας* is an expression which Tully often used, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the censure of the Romans.

I have sometimes been forced to amplify on others; but here, where the subject is so fruitful that the harvest overcomes the reaper, I am shortened by my chain, and can only see what is forbidden me to reach: since it is not permitted me to commend you according to the extent of my wishes, and much less is it in my power to make my commendations equal to your merits. Yet, in this frugality of your praises, there are some things which I cannot omit, without detracting from your character. You have so formed your own education as enables you to pay the debt you owe your country; or, more properly speaking, both your countries: because you were born, I may almost say in purple, at the castle of Dublin, when your grandfather was lord-lieutenant, and have since been bred in the court of England.

If this address had been in verse, I might have called you, as Claudian calls Mercury. "Numen commune, gemino faciens commercia mundo." The better to satisfy this double obligation, you have early cultivated

the genius you have to arms, that when the service of Britain or Ireland shall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practised in the camp; and thus both Lucullus and Cæsar (to omit a crowd of shining Romans) formed themselves to war by the study of history, and by the examples of the greatest captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name those two commanders in particular, because they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be sent into the field, against the most formidable enemy of Rome. Tully indeed was called the learned consul in derision; but then he was not born a soldier: his head was turned another way: when he read the Tac-ticks, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general who dares not make use of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage and resolution; in him it will direct his martial spirit; and teach him the way to the best victories, which are those that are least bloody, and which, though atchieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science distinguishes a man of honour from one of those athletic brutes whom undeservedly we call heroes. Cursed be the poet, who first honoured with that name a mere Ajax, a man-killing idiot. The Ulysses of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he understood not the shield
for

for which he pleaded : there were engraven on it, plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as stupidly as his fellow-beast the lion. But, on the other side, your Grace has given yourself the education of his rival: you have studied every spot of ground in Flanders, which for these ten years past has been the scene of battles and of sieges. No wonder if you performed your part with such applause on a theatre which you understood so well.

If I designed this for a poetical encomium, it were easy to enlarge on so copious a subject; but, confining myself to the severity of truth, and to what is becoming me to say, I must not only pass over many instances of your military skill, but also those of your assiduous diligence in the war: and of your personal bravery, attended with an ardent thirst of honour; a long train of generosity; profuseness of doing good; a soul unsatisfied with all it has done; and an unextinguished desire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own historians; I am, as Virgil says, "*Spatiis exclusus iniquis.*"

Yet, not to be wholly silent of all your charities, I must stay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the consideration of yourself. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had transported you so far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much less to succour you; when you were not only dangerously, but in all appearance mortally wounded,

ed, when in that desperate condition you were made prisoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in possession of the French; then it was, my lord, that you took a considerable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and as a memorable instance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of Count Guiscard, who was governor of the place, to be distributed among your fellow-prisoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatness of your soul, accordingly consigned it to the use for which it was intended by the donor: by which means the lives of so many miserable men were saved, and a comfortable provision made for their subsistence, who had otherwise perished, had not you been the companion of their misfortune: or rather sent by Providence, like another Joseph, to keep out famine from invading those whom in humility you called your brethren. How happy was it for those poor creatures, that your Grace was made their fellow-sufferer! and how glorious for you, that you chose to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others! The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, spoke like a christian; "*Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.*" All men, even those of a different interest, and contrary principles, must praise this action, as the most eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almost in any of the former; when men were made "*de meliore luto;*" when examples of charity were frequent, and when they were in being, "*Teucris pulcherrima proles, magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis.*" No envy can detract

detract from this: it will shine in history; and, like swans, grow whiter the longer it endures: and the name of ORMOND will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greatest triumphs.

But all actions of your grace are of a piece; as waters keep the tenor of their fountains: your compassion is general, and has the same effect as well on enemies as friends. It is so much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many, as the sun is always carrying his light to some part or other of the world: and were it not that your reason guides you where to give, I might almost say that you could not help bestowing more, than is consistent with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What wonder is it then, that, being born for a blessing to mankind, your supposed death in that engagement was so generally lamented through the nation! The concernment for it was as universal as the loss: and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in some, yet the tears of all were real: where every man deplored his private part in that calamity, and even those, who had not tasted of your favours, yet built so much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loss of their expectations.

This brought the untimely death of your great father into fresh remembrance; as if the same decree had passed on two, short successive generations of the virtuous; and I repeated to myself the same verses, which I had formerly applied to him: "*Offendunt terris hunc tantum fata,*

fata, nec ultra esse finunt." But to the joy not only of all good men, but of mankind in general, the unhappy omen took not place. You are still living to enjoy the blessings and applause of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long prosperity; and that your power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealously desired, than by

Your Grace's

Most humble,

Most obliged, and

Most obedient servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

P R E F A C E

PREFIXED TO THE FABLES.

IT is with a poet as with a man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the cost beforehand; but, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his account, and reckons short in the expence he first intended: he alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me: I have built a house, where I intended but a lodge: yet with better success than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finish the palace he had contrived.

From translating the first of Homer's *Iliads* (which I intended as an essay to the whole work) I proceeded to the translation of the twelfth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, because it contains, among other things, the causes, the beginning, and ending of the Trojan war: here I ought in reason to have stopped; but the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses lying next in my way, I could not balk them. When I had compassed them, I was so taken with the former part of the fifteenth book (which is the master-piece of the whole *Metamorphoses*), that I enjoined myself the pleasing task of rendering it into English. And now I found, by the number of my verses, that they began to swell into a little volume;
which

which gave me an occasion of looking backward on some beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the hunting of the boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good-natured story of Baucis and Philemon, with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same turn of verse which they had in the original; and this, I may say without vanity, is not the talent of every poet: he who has arrived the nearest to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the best versifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenser and Fairfax both flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; great masters in our language; and who saw much farther into the beauties of our numbers, than those who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical son of Spenser, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal descents and clans, as well as other families: Spenser more than once insinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body; and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his decease. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenser was his original; and many besides myself have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the Godfrey of Bulloign, which was turned into English by Mr. Fairfax. But to return: having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind, that our old English poet Chaucer in many things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on
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the side of the modern author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them: and as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the honour of my native country, so I soon resolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning some of the Canterbury tales into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means both the poets being set in the same light, and dressed in the same English habit, story to be compared with story, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them, by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him: of if I seem partial to my countryman, and predecessor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few: and besides many of the learned, Ovid has almost all the beaux, and the whole fair sex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have assumed somewhat more to myself than they allow me: because I have adventured to sum up the evidence: but the readers are the jury; and their privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the cause, or if they please, to bring it to another hearing, before some other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my discourse (as thoughts, according to Mr. Hobbes, have always some connexion) so from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but also pursued the same studies; wrote novels in prose, and many works in verse; particularly is said to have invented the octave rhyme, or stanza of eight lines, which ever since has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers, who are, or at least assume the title of Heroic Poets: he and Chaucer, among
other

other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at least in verse, before the time of Boccace, who likewise received no little help from his master Petrarch. But the reformation of their prose was wholly owing to Boccace himself, who is yet the standard of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phrases are become obsolete, as in process of time it must needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) first adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencall, which was then the most polished of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccace, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own; which whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who, mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators, that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are

are in my mind, the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject; to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose. I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse; yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness: they who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them; and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges, as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better?

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the

dead, colouring of the whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which favours of immorality or profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency; if the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved or forfeited, like contraband goods; at least, let their authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandise, and not of my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to choose such ables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral, which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm with a safe conscience, that I had taken the same care in all my former writings; for it must be owned, that supposing verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet if they contain any thing which shocks religion, or good-manners, they are at best, what Horace says of good numbers, without good sense, "*Versus inopes rerum, nugæque*" "*canoræ.*" Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing my other right of self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accused, and my sense wire-drawn into blasphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer, in a late pleading against the stage; in which he mixes truth with falsehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translation, which was the first Iliad of Homer. If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole Ilias; provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some chearfulness. And this I dare assure the world before-hand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil (though I say not the translation will be less laborious): for the Grecian is more according to my genius, than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners, and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him: Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined: so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry: for nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman poem is but the second part of the Ilias; a continuation of the same story: and the persons already formed: the manners of Æneas are those of Hector superadded to those which Homer gave him. The Adventures of Ulysses in the Odyssæis are imitated in the first Six Books of Virgil's Æneis: and though the accidents are not the same (which

would have argued him of a fervile copying, and total barrenness of invention) yet the seas were the same, in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypso. The six latter books of Virgil's poem are the four and twenty Iliads contracted: a quarrel occasioned by a lady, a single combat, battles fought, and a town besieged. I say not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just praise: for his Episodes are almost wholly of his own invention; and the form, which he has given to the telling, makes the tale his own, even though the original story had been the same. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to design: and if invention be the first virtue of an Epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the second place. Mr. Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald translation of the Ilias, (studying poetry as he did mathematicks, when it was too late) Mr. Hobbes, I say, begins the praise of Homer where he should have ended it. He tells us, that the first beauty of an Epic poem consists in diction, that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers: now, the words are the colouring of the work, which in the order of nature is last to be considered. The design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life; which is in the very definition of a poem. Words indeed, like glaring colours, are the first beauties that arise, and strike the sight: but if the draught be false or lame, the figures ill-disposed,

posed, the manners obscure or inconsistent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the finest colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monster at the best. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the former beauties; but in this last, which is expression, the Roman poet is at least equal to the Grecian, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the poverty of his language by his musical ear, and by his diligence. But to return: our two great poets, being so different in their tempers, one choleric and sanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their several ways, is, that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the design, as in the execution of it. The very heroes shew their authors; Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful, “*Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, &c.*” Æneas patient, considerate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies: ever submissive to the will of heaven, “*quo fata trahunt, retrahuntque, sequamur.*” I could please myself with enlarging on this subject, but I am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have said, I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other sets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. It is the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully. One persuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read

Homer, even not in the second book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in less compass than two months. This vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my temper; and therefore I have translated his first book with greater pleasure than any part of Virgil: but it was not a pleasure without pains: the continual agitations of the spirits must needs be a weakening of any constitution, especially in age; and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats; the *Iliad* of itself being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to say of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer; considering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue: from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings, it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same, philosophy and philology. Both of them were known in astronomy, of which Ovid's books of the Roman feasts, and Chaucer's treatise of the Astrolabe, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness: neither were great inven-

tors:

tors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables; and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors. Boccace's *Decameron* was first published; and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his *Canterbury tales*: yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written in all probability by some Italian wit, in a former age; as I shall prove hereafter: the tale of *Grizild* was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace; from whom it came to Chaucer: *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a Lombard author; but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention, than to invent themselves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt; are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: besides, the nature of a preface is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Cock and the Fox*, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his.

Both of them understood the manners, under which name I comprehend the passions, and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits: for an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury tales, their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard in Southwark: yet even there too the figures in Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light: which though I have not time to prove; yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be considered in the comparison of the two poets; and I have saved myself one half of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid; or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered: and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described, on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad, for preferring the Englishman to the Roman: yet, with
their

their leave, I must presume to say, that the things they admire, are not only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of "*inopem me copia fecit*," and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death! This is just John Littlewit in Bartholemew Fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit. On these occasions the poet should endeavour to raise pity: but, instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines, when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido: he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it: yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed. He had complained he was farther off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They, who think otherwise, would by the same reason prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the
turn

turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets; they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and I confess, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, nor meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill-forted; whole pyramids of sweet-meats, for boys and women; but little of solid meat, for men: all this proceeded not from any want of knowledge,
but

but of judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer: and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth: for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not stand.

Chaucer followed nature every where; but was never so bold to go beyond her: and there is a great difference of being Poeta and nimis Poeta, if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was “*auribus istius temporis accommodata*,” they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and

and-revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse, which we call Heroic, was either not known, or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being: and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life, and fortunes: they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wife as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not found, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest

greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Gaunt his patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale of Piers Plowman: yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his Canterbury tales: neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them. Yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders: for the scandal which is given by particular priests, reflects not on the sacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Chanon, and his Fryer, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satyrical poet is the check of the laymen, on bad priests. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used: for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured: if he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander; and it is at the poet's peril, if he transgresses the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of satire, though never so

so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing dishonoured, when a peer suffers for his treason? If he be libeled, or any way defamed, he has his "*Scandalum Magnatum*" to punish the offender. They, who use this kind of argument, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash; and are less concerned for their public capacity, than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties: for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure, that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not: but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbishop of Canterbury; one standing up for the Laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has saved me the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it: yet I must needs say, that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a Christian, to forgive him. "Prior læsit" is justification sufficient in the Civil Law.

If

If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure, must be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure, reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the good parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his Canterbury tales the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding;

breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other, as much as the mincing lady prioress, and the broad-speaking gap-toothed wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our fore-fathers and great grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, and Chanons, and lady Abbeſſes, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice, (since my enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man); may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as favour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchants, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are
beaux

beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good-manners: I am sensible, as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it. “Totum hoc indictum volo.” Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad-speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the Canterbury tales, thus excuses the ribaldry, which is very gross in many of his novels.

But first, I pray you of your courtesy,
 That ye ne arrettee it nought my villany,
 Though that I plainly speak in this mattere
 To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
 Ne though I speak her words properly,
 For this ye knowen as well as I,
 Who shall tellen a tale after a man,
 He mote rehearse as nye, as ever he can:
 Everich word of it been in his charge,
 All speke he, never so rudely, ne large.
 Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
 Or feine things, or find words new:
 He may not spare, although he were his brother,
 He mote as well say o word as another.
 Christ spake himself full broad in holy writ,
 And well I wote no villany is it,

Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede,
The words mote been coufin to the dede.

Yet if a man should have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing such characters, where obscene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard; I know not what answer they could have made: for that reason, such tale shall be left untold by me. You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete, that his sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verses consist of ten syllables, and the words not much behind our present English: as for example, these two lines, in the description of the carpenter's young wife:

Wincing she was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late earl of Leicester say, that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author: but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public: Mr. Cowley
was

was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old stile, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished, ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece: but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits besides Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater), I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther, in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press: let this example suffice at present;

in the story of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses, in all the editions of our author:

There saw I Danè turned into a tree,

I mean not the goddess Diane,

But Venus daughter, which that hight Danè:

Which after a little consideration I knew was to be reformed into this sense, that Daphne the daughter of Peneus was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourn should arise, and say, I varied from my author, because I understood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person, whom I mentioned, the late earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley despised him. My lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be

to be understood, then as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure:

“ Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere; cadentque,
 “ Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula; si volet usus,
 “ Quem penès arbitrium est, & jus, & norma loquendi.”

When an ancient word for its sound and significancy deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity, to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed; customs are changed; and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty, by the innovation of words; in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transference, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly! And if imperfectly, then with less profit and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends, that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understood sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I

may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer, than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: "*Facile est inventis addere,*" is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiselle de Scudery, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal (for how she should come to understand old English I know not). But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the same and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If
this

this be wholly chance, it is extraordinary, and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

Boccace comes last to be considered, who, living in the same age with Chaucer, had the same genius, and followed the same studies: both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greatest resemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar stile, and pleasing way of relating comical adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the serious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's side; for though the Englishman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that those of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled: so that what there was of invention in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the stories which he has borrowed, in his way of telling; though prose allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at disadvantage. I desire not the reader should take my word: and therefore I will set two of their discourses on the same subject, in the same light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I translated Chaucer first, and, amongst the rest, pitched on the Wife of Bath's tale; not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her prologue, because it is too licentious: there Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight of noble blood was

forced to marry, and consequently loathed her: the crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his aversion, endeavours to win his affection by reason, and speaks a good word for herself, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the sullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and ugliness, the vanity of youth, and the silly pride of ancestry and titles without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had closed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and translated some more of his fables; and by this time had so far forgotten the Wife of Bath's tale, that, when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the same argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood, and titles, in the story of Sigismunda; which I had certainly avoided for the resemblance of the two discourses, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, which is of the Epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Ilias* or the *Æneis*: the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various; and the disposition full as artful; only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least; but Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return

turn of Palamon to Athens. I had thought for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth, and Chaucer's own: but I was undeceived by Boccace; for casually looking on the end of his seventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he shadows himself) and Fiametta (who represents his mistress the natural daughter of Robert king of Naples) of whom these words are spoken, "*Dioneo e la Fiametta granpezza contaron insieme d' Arcita, e di Palamone:*" by which it appears that this story was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly lost, Chaucer is now become an original; and I question not but the poem has received many beauties by passing through his noble hands. Besides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called *The Flower and the Leaf*; with which I was so particularly pleased, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myself from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done justice to others, I owe somewhat to myself: not that I think it worth my time to enter the lists with one Milbourn, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that such men there are who have written scurrilously against me, without any provocation. Milbourn, who is in Orders, pretends amongst the rest this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood: if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his
part

part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I condemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. If (as they say, he has declared in print) he prefers the version of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the same compliment: for it is agreed on all hands, that he writes even below Ogilby: that, you will say, is not easily to be done; but what cannot Milbourn bring about? I am satisfied however, that while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks as if I had desired him underhand to write so ill against me: but upon my honest word I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. It is true, I should be glad, if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on any thing of mine: for I find by experience he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains with my poetry; but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts) I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners and my principles are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry: and so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of Absalom and Achitophel, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead: and therefore peace be to the Manes of his Arthurs. I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an Epic poem on king Arthur, in my preface to the translation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirlbats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus. Yet from that preface he plainly took his hint: for he began immediately upon the story; though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor; but instead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality; and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his glosses; and interpreted my words into blasphemy and
baudry,

baudry, of which they were not guilty; besides that he is too much given to horse-play in his raillery; and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not say, The zeal of God's house has eaten him up; but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good-manners and civility. It might also be doubted whether it were altogether zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbish of ancient and modern plays; a divine might have employed his pains to better purpose, than in the nastiness of Plautus and Aristophanes; whose examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly supposed, that he read them not without some pleasure. They who have written commentaries on those poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained some vices, which without their interpretation had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us.

There is more baudry in one Play of Fletcher's, called *The Custom of the Country*, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the stage in my remembrance. Are the times so much more reformed now, than they were five and twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cause of my fellow-poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have some of them answered for themselves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. Collier so formidable an enemy, that we should shun him. He has lost ground at the latter end
of

of the day, by pursuing his point too far, like the prince of Conde at the battle of Senneph: from immoral plays, to no plays; “*ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia.*” But being a party, I am not to erect myself into a judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels, that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourn are only distinguished from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy.

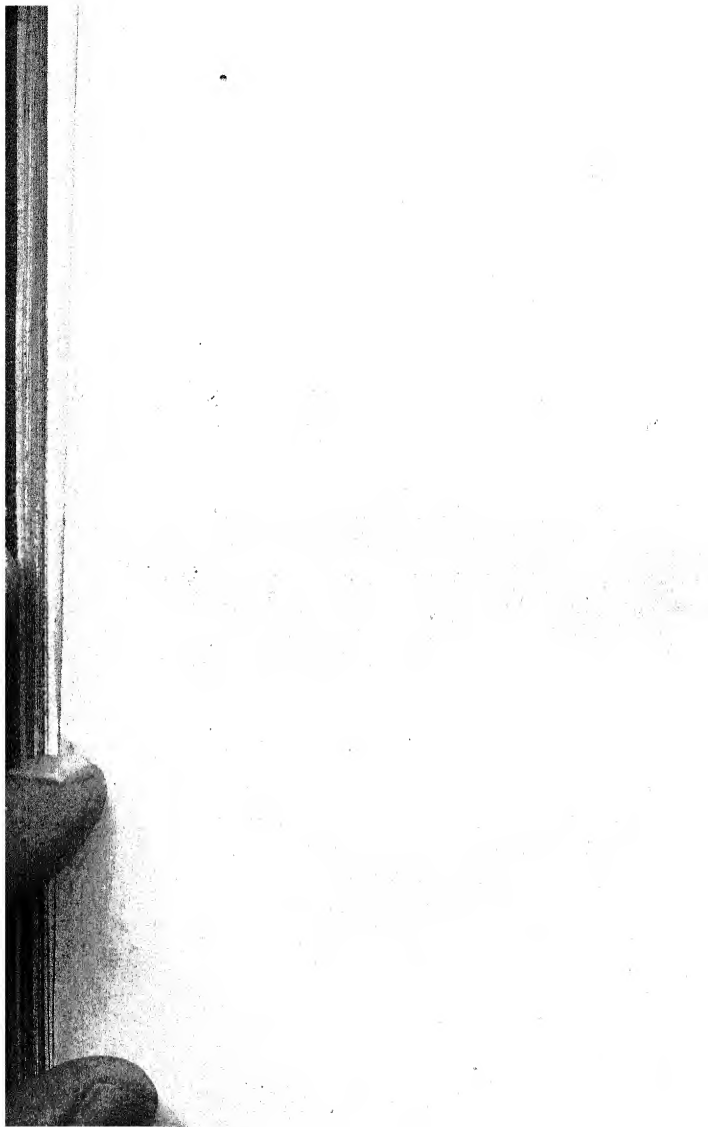
— “*Demetri, Teque Tigelli*

“*Discipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.*”

T A L E S

FROM

C H A U C E R.



T O

HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF ORMOND,

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM OF

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

MADAM,

THE bard who first adorn'd our native tongue,
 Tun'd to his British lyre this ancient song:
 Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,
 And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verse:
 He match'd their beauties, where they most excel;
 Of love sung better, and of arms as well.

Vouchsafe, illustrious Ormond, to behold
 What power the charms of beauty had of old;
 Nor wonder if such deeds of arms were done,
 Inspir'd by two fair eyes that sparkled like your own.

If Chaucer by the best idea wrought,
 And poets can divine each other's thought,
 The fairest nymph before his eyes he set;
 And then the fairest was Plantagenet;
 Who three contending princes made their prize,
 And rul'd the rival nations with her eyes:
 Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
 And to the noblest order gave the name.

Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
 You keep her conquests, and extend your own:

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E

As

As when the stars in their ethereal race,
 At length have roll'd around the liquid space,
 At certain periods they resume their place,
 From the same point of heaven their course advance,
 And move in measures of their former dance;
 Thus, after length of ages, she returns,
 Restor'd in you, and the same place adorns;
 Or you perform her office in the sphere,
 Born of her blood, and make a new platonic year.
 O true Plantagenet, O race divine,
 (For beauty still is fatal to the line,)
 Had Chaucer liv'd that angel-face to view,
 Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
 Or had you liv'd to judge the doubtful right,
 Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
 And conquering Theseus from his side had sent
 Your generous lord, to guide the Theban government.
 Time shall accomplish that; and I shall see
 A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
 Already have the Fates your path prepar'd,
 And sure presage your future sway declar'd:
 When westward, like the sun, you took your way,
 And from benighted Britain bore the day,
 Blue Triton gave the signal from the shore,
 The ready Nereids heard, and swam before
 To smooth the seas; a soft Etesian gale
 But just inspir'd, and gently swell'd the sail;
 Portunus took his turn, whose ample hand
 Heav'd up his lighten'd keel, and sunk the sand,
 And steer'd the sacred vessel safe to land.

The

The land, if not restrain'd, had met your way,
 Projected out a neck, and juttet to the sea.
 Hibernia, prostrate at your feet, ador'd
 In you, the pledge of her expected lord;
 Due to her isle; a venerable name;
 His father and his grandfire known to fame;
 Aw'd by that house, accustom'd to command,
 The sturdy Kerns in due subjection stand;
 Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand. }
 At your approach, they crowded to the port;
 And, scarcely landed, you create a court:
 As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;
 For Venus is the promise of the sun.
 The waste of civil wars, their towns destroy'd,
 Pales unhonour'd, Ceres unemploy'd,
 Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
 Wip'd all the tears of three campaigns away.
 Blood, rapines, massacres, were cheaply bought,
 So mighty recompence your beauty brought.
 As when the dove returning bore the mark
 Of earth restor'd to the long labouring ark,
 The relicks of mankind, secure of rest, }
 Ope'd every window to receive the guest,
 And the fair bearer of the message blest'd; }
 So, when you came, with loud repeated cries, }
 The nation took an omen from your eyes,
 And God advanc'd his rainbow in the skies, }
 To sign inviolable peace restor'd;
 The saints with solemn shouts proclaim'd the new accord.

When at your second coming you appear,
 (For I foretel that millenary year)
 The sharpen'd share shall vex the soil no more,
 But earth unbidden shall produce her store;
 The land shall laugh, the circling ocean smile,
 And heaven's indulgence blefs the holy isle.
 Heaven from all ages has reserv'd for you
 That happy clime, which venom never knew;
 Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
 Have power to chase all poison, but their own.

Now in this interval, which fate has cast
 Betwixt your future glories and your past,
 This pause of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
 While England celebrates your safe return,
 By which you seem the seasons to command,
 And bring our summers back to their forsaken land.

The vanquish'd isle our leisure must attend,
 Till the fair blessing we vouchsafe to send;
 Nor can we spare you long, though often we may lend. }
 The dove was twice employ'd abroad, before
 The world was dry'd, and she return'd no more.

Nor dare we trust so soft a messenger,
 New from her sickness, to that northern air;
 Rest here a while your lustre to restore,
 That they may see you, as you shone before;
 For yet, th' eclipse not wholly past, you wade
 Through some remains, and dimness of a shade.

A subject in his prince may claim a right,
 Nor suffer him with strength impair'd to fight;

Till force returns, his ardor we restrain,
And curb his warlike wish to cross the main.

Now past the danger, let the learn'd begin
Th' inquiry, where disease could enter in;
How those malignant atoms forc'd their way,
What in the faultless frame they found to make their
prey?

Where every element was weigh'd so well,
That heaven alone, who mix'd the mass, could tell. }
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;
And where, imprison'd in so sweet a cage,
A soul might well be pleas'd to pass an age.

And yet the fine materials made it weak:
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break:
Ev'n to your breast the sickness durst aspire;
And, forc'd from that fair temple to retire, }
Profanely set the holy place on fire.

In vain your lord like young Vespasian mourn'd,
When the fierce flames the sanctuary burn'd:

And I prepar'd to pay in verses rude
A most detested act of gratitude:

Ev'n this had been your elegy, which now
Is offer'd for your health, the table of my vow.

Your angel sure our Morley's mind inspir'd,
To find the remedy your ill requir'd;

As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream an herb for Ptolomee:
Or heaven, which had such over-cost bestow'd,

As scarce it could afford to flesh and blood,
So lik'd the frame, he would not work anew,

To save the charges of another you.

Or by his middle science did he steer,
And saw some great contingent good appear
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end, preserv'd the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated in his better mind
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind.

Blest be the power which has at once restor'd
The hopes of lost succession to your lord,
Joy to the first and last of each degree,
Virtue to courts, and, what I long'd to see,
To you the Graces, and the Muse to me.
O daughter of the rose, whose cheeks unite
The differing titles of the red and white;
Who heaven's alternate beauty well display,
The blush of morning and the milky way;
Whose face is paradise, but fenc'd from sin:
For God in either eye has plac'd a cherubin.

All is your lord's alone; ev'n absent, he
Employs the care of chaste Penelope.
For him you waste in tears your widow'd hours,
For him your curious needle paints the flowers;
Such works of old Imperial dames were taught;
Such, for Ascanius, fair Elisa wrought.
The soft recesses of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:
All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son;
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

PALAMON

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

O R,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK I.

IN days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,
 A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name:
 A chief who more in feats of arms excell'd,
 The rising nor the setting sun beheld.
 Of Athens he was lord; much land he won.
 And added foreign countries to his crown.
 In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,
 Whom first by force he conquer'd, then by love;
 He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
 With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
 With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
 With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
 And his victorious army at his side. }
 I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
 Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way:
 But, were it not too long, I would recite }
 The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
 Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight;
 The town besieg'd, and how much blood it cost
 The female army and th' Athenian host;
 The spousals of Hippolita the queen;
 What tilts and turneys at the feast were seen;

The storm at their return, the ladies fear:
 But these, and other things, I must forbear.
 The field is spacious I design to sow,
 With oxen far unfit to draw the plow:
 The remnant of my tale is of a length
 To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
 And trivial accidents shall be forborn,
 That others may have time to take their turn;
 As was at first enjoin'd us by mine host:
 That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,
 Should win his supper at our common cost.

And therefore where I left, I will pursue
 This ancient story, whether false or true,
 In hope it may be mended with a new.
 The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,
 In this array drew near th' Athenian town;
 When in his pomp and utmost of his pride,
 Marching he chanc'd to cast his eye aside,
 And saw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
 By two and two across the common way:
 At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
 And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
 Creeping and crying, till they seiz'd at last
 His courser's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.

Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are,
 And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
 Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
 To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds?
 Or envy you my praise, and would destroy
 With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?

Or

Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief.

The most in years of all the mourning train
Began (but swooned first away for pain);
Then scarce recover'd spoke: nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, th' afflicted to redress,
And fame has fill'd the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refus'd to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief:
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears,
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait:
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But reverence thou the power whose name it bears,
Relieve th' oppress'd, and wipe the widow's tears,
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; curst be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array,
To make their moan, their lords in battle lost
Before that town besieg'd by our confederate host:
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,

Denies

Denies the rites of funeral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed:
At this she shriek'd aloud; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and, groveling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to their helpless kind!

The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And what e'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece should see perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his just reward.
He said no more, hut, shunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way:
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:
Where in an argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seem'd to glow with fire;

Ev'n

Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the standard flew,
And the green grafs was dy'd to fanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure:
The foldiers shout around with generous rage,
And in that victory their own prefage.
He prais'd their ardour; inly pleas'd to fee
His hoft the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd; and all th' enfuing night;
And faw the city with returning light.
The procefs of the war I need not tell,
How Thefeus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:
Or after, how by ftorm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sack'd and burn'd the town:
How to the ladies he reftor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle flain:
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;
All thefe to fitter times fhall be deferr'd:
I fpare the widows tears, their woeful cries,
And howling at their husbands obfequies;
How Thefeus at thefe funerals did affift,
And with what gifts the mourning dames difmifs'd.

Thus when the victor chief had Creon flain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain
His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,
The country wafte'd, and the hamlets burn'd,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without control to ftrip and fpoil the dead.

There, in a heap of flain, among the reft
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load opprefs'd

Of

Of slaughter'd foes, whom first to death they sent,
 The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
 Both fair, and both of royal blood they seem'd,
 Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deem'd;
 That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
 Their swords, their shields, their furcoats, were the same.
 Close by each other laid, they press'd the ground,
 Their manly bosoms pierc'd with many a grievous wound;
 Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
 But some faint signs of feeble life appear:
 The wandering breath was on the wing to part,
 Weak was the pulse, and hardly heav'd the heart.
 These two were sisters' sons; and Arcite one,
 Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
 From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
 And softly both convey'd to Theseus' tent:
 Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
 He to his city sent as prisoners of the war,
 Hopeless of ransom, and condemn'd to lie
 In durance, doom'd a lingering death to die.
 This done, he march'd away with warlike sound,
 And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,
 Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more
 renown'd.

But in a tower, and never to be loos'd,
 The woeful captive kinsmen are inclos'd:

Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
 Till once, 'twas on the morn of chearful May,
 The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
 Than the fair lily on the flowery green,

More

More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
For with the rosy colour strove her hue,
Wak'd, as her custom was, before the day,
To do th' observance due to sprightly May:
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguish'd loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Arose, and dress'd herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair;
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May. }

At every turn, she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose, and every rose she drew
She shook the stalk, and brush'd away the dew:
Then party-colour'd flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, she sung and carol'd out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Ev'n wondering Philomel forgot to sing;
And learn'd from her to welcome-in the spring.

The

The tower, of which before was mention made,
 Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
 Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
 Was one partition of the palace wall:
 The garden was inclos'd within the square,
 Where young Emilia took the morning-air.

It happen'd Palamon the prisoner knight,
 Restless for woe, arose before the light,
 And with his jaylor's leave desir'd to breathe
 An air more wholesome than the damps beneath.
 This granted, to the tower he took his way,
 Chear'd with the promise of a glorious day:

Then cast a languishing regard around,
 And saw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd
 With golden spires, and all the hostile ground. }
 He sigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, because he knew
 'Twas but a larger gaol he had in view:

Then look'd below, and from the castle's height
 Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight:
 The garden, which before he had not seen,
 In spring's new livery clad of white and green,
 Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks be- }
 tween.

This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms across
 He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
 Himself an object of the public scorn,
 And often wish'd he never had been born,
 At last, for so his destiny requir'd,
 With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,

He

He through a little window cast his fight,
Though thick of bars that gave a scanty light:
But ev'n that glimmering serv'd him to descry
Th' inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but, seiz'd with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with over-powering light he stood,
Then started back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.

Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done th' offence? But if, said he,
Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heaven, with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since fate will have it so:
So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, rul'd our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth:
Whate'er betides, by destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly seek to shun.

Nor of my bonds, said Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caus'd my cry,
That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierc'd with a random shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.

Look

Look how she walks along yon shady space,
 Not Juno moves with more majestic grace;
 And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
 If thou art Venus (for thy charms confess
 That face was form'd in heaven, nor art thou less;
 Disguis'd in habit, undisguis'd in shape)
 O help us captives from our chains to 'scape;
 But if our doom be past in bonds to lie
 For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,
 Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our disgrace,
 And shew compassion to the Theban race,
 Oppress'd by tyrant power! While yet he spoke,
 Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
 The fatal dart a ready passage found,
 And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
 So that if Palamon were wounded fore,
 Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
 Then from his inmost soul he sigh'd, and said,
 The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
 Unknowingly she strikes; and kills by chance;
 Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
 O, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
 Her mind to mercy, or must die for love.

Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
 (Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)
 Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein?
 Jestings, said Arcite, suits but ill with pain.
 It suits far worse (said Palamon again,
 And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,
 Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;

But

But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one should be the common good of both;
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the Gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to further my design:
As I am bound by vow to further thine:
Nor canst, nor dar'st thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend:
And would'st thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release would choose to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain:
For first my love began ere thine was born;
Thou, as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound t' assist my elderhip of right:
Or justly to be deem'd a perjurd knight.

Thus Palamon: but Arcite with disdain
In haughty language thus reply'd again;
Forsworn thyself: the traitor's odious name
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nurs't
With strong desires, I lov'd the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflam'd
To worship, and a power celestial nam'd?

Thine was devotion to the blest above,
 I saw the woman, and desir'd her love;
 First own'd my passion, and to thee commend
 Th' important secret, as my chosen friend.
 Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire
 A moment elder than my rival fire;
 Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
 And know'st thou not, no law is made for love;
 Law is to things which to free choice relate;
 Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
 Laws are but positive; love's power, we see,
 Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree.
 Each day we break the bond of human laws
 For love, and vindicate the common cause.
 Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,
 Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste:
 Maids, widows, wives, without distinction fall;
 The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
 If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
 I keep the greater, while I break the less;
 And both are mad alike, since neither can possess.
 Both hopeless to be ransom'd, never more
 To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.

Like Æsop's hounds contending for the bone,
 Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone:
 The fruitless fight continued all the day;
 A cur came by, and snatch'd the prize away.
 As courtiers therefore juggle for a grant,
 And when they break their friendship plead their want,

So thou, if fortune will thy fuit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I must love, and am resolv'd to try
My fate, or failing in th' adventure die.

Great was their strife, which hourly was renew'd,
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a furly stand;
And glar'd like angry lions as they pass'd,
And wish'd that every look might be their last.

It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came t' attend
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend;
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripen'd into man.
Companions of the war; and lov'd so well,
That when one dy'd, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.

But to pursue my tale; to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honour'd by this young Theſſalian prince.
Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,
Restor'd to liberty the captive knight,
But on these hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of th' offence.

To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.

Unpleas'd and penfive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
What have I gain'd, he said, in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And banish'd from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom, than I felt in bonds before;
Forc'd from her presence, and condemn'd to live:
Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:
Heaven is not, but where Emily abides;
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurst,
Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:
Had I not known that prince, I still had been
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen:
For though I never can her grace deserve,
'Tis recompence enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is th' adventure; thine the victory:
Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thine eyes,
In prison, no; but blissful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.

I mourn

I mourn in absence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But, doom'd to drag my loathsome life in care,
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief:
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell,
With youth and life, and life itself farewell.

But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are slain;
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murder'd by those they trusted with their life,
A favour'd servant, or a bosom wife.
Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken fots about the street we roam:
Well knows the sot he has a certain home;

Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers every pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came: from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily.

Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan:
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;
The hollow tower with clamours rings around;
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropt all o'er with agony of sweat.
Alas! he cry'd! I wretch in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou may'st, since thou hast youth and courage join'd,
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace;
And after, by some treaty made, possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.
Thus all th' advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine.

The

The rage of Jealoufy then fir'd his foul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold Defpair, fucceeding in her ftead,
To livid palenefs turns the glowing red.
His blood, fcarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind conftains.
Then thus he faid: Eternal Deities,
Who rule the world with abfolute decrees,
And write whatever time fhall bring to pafs,
With pens of adamant, on plates of brafs;
What, is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the reft is liable to pain,
And like the fheep, his brother-beaft, is flain.
Cold, hunger, prifons, ills without a cure,
All thefe he muft, and guiltlefs oft endure;
Or does your juftice, power, or prefciences fail,
When the good fuffer, and the bad prevail?
What worfe to wretched virtue could befall,
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?
Nay, worfe than other beafts is our eftate;
Them, to purfue their pleafures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, muft curb our will,
And your commands, not our defires, fulfil;
Then when the creature is unjuftly flain,
Yet after death at leaft he feels no pain;
But man in life furcharg'd with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doom'd to fuffer more.
A ferpent fhots his ftmg at unaware;
An ambuſh'd thief forelays a traveller:

The man lies murder'd, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just or unjust, I have my share of woe,
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath, that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love.

Let Palamon oppress'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this, the sun, declining from his height,
The day had shorten'd, to prolong the night
The lengthen'd night gave length of misery
Both to the captive lover and the free;
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns:
The banish'd never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains:
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains:
One free, and all his motions uncontrol'd,
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would behold.
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banish'd knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worse, than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madness of despair,
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.

Dry

Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink.
Bereft of sleep, he loaths his meat and drink.
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves:
In solitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone:
Nor, mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleasures shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.
His spirits are so low, his voice is drown'd,
He hears as from afar, or in a swoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire:
But full of museful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that, slumbering as he lay,
He dream'd (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with soft words his drooping spirits chear'd:
His hat, adorn'd with wings, disclos'd the God,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod:
Such as he seem'd, when, at his fire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.

Arise,

Arise, he said, to conquering Athens go,
There fate appoints an end to all thy woe.
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a start,
Against his bosom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce-recover'd breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's fight I shall expire.
By chance he spy'd a mirror while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;
Wondering, he saw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see unknown my mistress day by day.
He said; and cloth'd himself in coarse array:
A labouring hind in shew; then forth he went,
And to th' Athenian towers his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,
Made conscious of his master's enterprise.
Arriv'd at Athens soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestion'd, in that thick resort:
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair besel him, that for little gain
He serv'd at first Emilia's chamberlain;

And,

And, watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refus'd no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He pass'd a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteem'd, so well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace:
That, exercis'd within a higher sphere,
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theseus to high favour rais'd:
Among his menial servants first enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with sums of gold:
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent:
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,
But cautiously conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increase,
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus' person he was ever near;
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON AND ARCITE:
O R,
THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK II.

WHILE Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immur'd, the captive knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty, and love, at once he bore:
His prison pain'd him much, his passion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.

But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins receiv'd the sun,
Were it by chance, or forceful destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,
Assisted by a friend, one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight:
A pleasant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd with added store
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallow'd unaware the sleepy draught,
And snor'd secure till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the rising sun.
A thick spread forest near the city lay,
To this with lengthen'd strides he took his way
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day).

} Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our stile;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning-lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted in her song the morning gray;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to see the joyous fight;
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, resolv'd to pay
Observance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At ease he seem'd, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horse's reins,
The grove I nam'd before; and, lighted there,
A woodbine garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face against the rising day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.

For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year:

For

For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
 And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
 When thy short reign is past, the feverish fun
 The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.
 So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,
 Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,
 As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find
 The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind.

His vows address'd, within the grove he stray'd,
 Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
 His steps where secret Palamon was laid. }
 Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
 Who flying death had there conceal'd his flight, }
 In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal
 fight: }

And less he knew him for his hated foe,
 But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
 But as it has been said of ancient years,
 That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears;
 For this the wife are ever on their guard,
 For, unforeseen, they say, is unprepar'd.
 Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
 And less than all suspected Palamon,
 Who listening heard him, while he search'd the grove,
 And loudly sung his roundelay of love:
 But on the sudden stopp'd, and silent stood,
 As lovers often muse, and change their mood;
 Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell;
 Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:

For

For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite, having sung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desperate sigh, accusing heaven and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
Curs'd be the day when first I did appear;
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year. }
Still will the jealous Queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead; the Theban city was:
Yet ceases not her hate: for all who come
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree!
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame, }
Has forc'd me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy:
Mars ruin'd Thebes: his mother ruin'd me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Besides myself, th' unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds, and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure;
But Love's a malady without a cure;
Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,
He fires within, and hisses at my heart.

Your

Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.
Of such a Goddess no time leaves record,
Who burn'd the temple where she was ador'd:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleas'd with my sufferings, if you knew my pain.

At this a sickly qualm his heart assail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his senses fail'd.
No word miss'd Palamon of all he spoke,
But soon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
No longer staid, but, starting from his place,
Discover'd stood, and shew'd his hostile face:
False traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found foresworn, for Emily;
And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die.
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrow'd name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him who set thee free:
But rest assur'd, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily:
For, though unarm'd I am, and (free'd by chance)
Am here without my sword, or pointed lance:
Hope not, base man, unquestion'd hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.

Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His sword unsheath'd, and fiercely thus began:

Now

Now by the Gods who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last, or in this grove
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love.
The surety which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers perjury. }
Know I will serve the fair in thy despight;
But since thou art my kinsman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both un-
known;

With arms of proof both for myself and thee;
Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.
And, that a better ease thou may'st abide,
Bedding and cloaths I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou may'st be
A conquest better won, and worthy me.
His promise Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the first he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign, }
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon;
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite return'd, and, as in honour ty'd,
His foe with bedding and with food supply'd;

Then, ere the day, two suits of armour fought,
 Which borne before him on his steed he brought:
 Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure,
 As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
 Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,
 The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
 Approach; each other from afar they knew,
 And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.
 So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,
 Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
 And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
 His course at distance by the bending trees;
 And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy,
 And either he must fall in fight, or I:
 This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
 A generous chinefs seizes every part:
 The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart. }

Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
 None greets; for none the greeting will return:
 But in dumb furliness, each arm'd with care
 His foe profess, as brother of the war:
 Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
 Against each other, arm'd with sword and lance:
 They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
 Their corslets, and the thinnest parts explore.
 Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,
 And wounded, wound; till both were bath'd in blood;
 And not a foot of ground had either got,
 As if the world depended on the spot.

Fell Arcite like an angry tiger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles, and with frothy jaws,
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.
The power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heaven foresees,
Call'd providence, or chance, or fatal sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years:
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on powers above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears; whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chace in forests to destroy,
This gentle knight, inspir'd by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.
Beside him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attir'd in lively green,
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:

And as he follow'd Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way that Theseus took was to the wood
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:
'The lawn on which they fought, th' appointed place
In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chase.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,
That shaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And, thence dislodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,
Like lightning flam'd their faulchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they strook,
There seem'd less force requir'd to fell an oak:
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight:
Resolv'd to learn, he spur'd his fiery steed
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt them on the place;
And with his sword unsheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to cease their strife:
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat;
What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,
As in a lifted field to fight your cause?
Unask'd the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?

Then

Then Palamon, with scarce recover'd breath,
Thus hasty spoke: We both deserve the death,
And both would die; for look the world around,
A pair so wretched is not to be found,
Our life's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
We long to set th' imprison'd soul at large.
Now as thou art a sovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me,
Let neither find thy grace; for grace is cruelty. }
Me first, O kill me first; and cure my woe;
Then sheath the sword of justice on my foe:
Or kill him first; for when his name is heard,
He foremost will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe:
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow;
But first contracted, that if ever found
By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,
His head should pay the forfeit; see return'd
The perjurd knight, his oath and honour scorn'd.
For this is he, who, with a borrow'd name
And proffer'd service, to thy palace came,
Now call'd Philostratus: retain'd by thee,
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily. }
My part remains; from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myself th' unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; since no disgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke my chain,
Nor promis'd I thy prisoner to remain:

The love of liberty with life is given,
And life itself th' inferior gift of Heaven.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue;
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.
More wouldst thou know? I love bright Emily,
And for her sake and in her fight will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no less
Deserves; and I thy righteous doom will bless,
Assur'd that what I lose, he never shall possess. }
To this reply'd the stern Athenian prince,
And sourly smil'd, In owning your offence,
You judge yourself; and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your desert, the death you have decreed;
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed:
By Mars, the patron of my arms, yon die.
He said; dumb sorrow seiz'd the standers-by.
The queen above the rest, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when she began,
Through the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.
All dropt their tears, ev'n the contended maid:
And thus among themselves they softly said:
What eyes can suffer this unworthy fight!
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
The mastership of heaven in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind:

See

See their wide streaming wounds; they neither came
For pride of empire, nor desire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause:
But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cause.
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,
They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place,
From the fierce king, implor'd th' offenders grace.

He paus'd a while, stood silent in his mood
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood);
But soon his tender mind th' impression felt,
(As softest metals are not slow to melt
And pity soonest runs in softest minds):
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds
His passion cast a mist before his sense,
And either made, or magnify'd th' offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cause?
The prisoner freed himself by nature's laws:
Born free, he fought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes,
And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compassion more, he shook his head,
And softly sighing to himself he said:

Curse on th' unpardoning prince, whom tears can
draw

To no remorse; who rules by lions law;
And deaf to prayers, by no submission bow'd,
Rends all alike; the penitent, and proud:

At this, with look serene, he rais'd his head;
Reason resum'd her place, and passion fled:
Then thus aloud he spoke: The power of love,
In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod;
By daily miracles declar'd a God:
He blinds the wise, gives eye-sight to the blind;
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hinder'd either in their native soil
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil;
But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought them in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserv'd; for well they know,
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe;
The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,
Is hardly granted to the Gods above.
See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
With which their master, Love, rewards their pains;
For seven long years, on duty every day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on;
And, ask the fools, they think it wisely done;
Nor ease, nor wealth, nor life itself regard,
For 'tis their maxim, Love is love's reward.
'This is not all; the fair for whom they strove
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,
Nor thought, when she beheld the sight from far,
Her beauty was th' occasion of the war.

But

But sure a general doom on man is past,
And all are fools and lovers, first or last:
This both by others and myself I know,
For I have serv'd their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learn'd how far the God can human hearts con-
strain.

To this remembrance, and the prayers of those
Who for th' offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
To do me homage as their sovereign lord;
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person, and assert my right.
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.
Then thus the king his secret thoughts explain'd;
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known:
But should you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed:
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to destiny.
Now hear th' award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love!
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;

But

But on the day when this returning fun
To the same point through every sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring,
In royal lists, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his opposite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquish'd party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine t' adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions so renown'd;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright. }
If both are satisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword.
Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravish'd Arcite seems to touch the sky:
The whole assembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol th' award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious king. The knights with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inspiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.

It might be deem'd on our historian's part,
 Or too much negligence, or want of art,
 If he forgot the vast magnificence
 Of royal Theseus, and his large expence.
 He first inclos'd for lists a level ground,
 The whole circumference a mile around;
 The form was circular; and all without
 A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
 Within an amphitheatre appear'd,
 Rais'd in degrees; to sixty paces rear'd:
 That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
 Height was allow'd for him above to see.

Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
 The like adorn'd the western opposite.
 A nobler object than this fabric was,
 Rome never saw; nor of so vast a space:
 For, rich with spoils of many a conquer'd land,
 All arts and artists Theseus could command;
 Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
 The master-painters and the carvers came.
 So rose within the compass of the year
 An age's work, a glorious theatre.
 Then o'er its eastern gate was rais'd above
 A temple, sacred to the queen of love;
 An altar stood below: on either hand
 A priest with roses crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.

The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
 And on the north a turret was inclos'd,
 Within the wall of alabaster white,
 And crimson coral for the queen of night,
 Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.

}
 Within

Within these oratories might you see
 Rich carvings, pourtraitures, and imagery:
 Where every figure to the life express'd
 The godhead's power to whom it was address'd.
 In Venus' temple on the sides were seen
 The broken slumbers of enamour'd men,
 Prayers that even spoke, and pity seem'd to call,
 And issuing sighs that smok'd along the wall.
 Complaints, and hot desires, the lover's hell,
 And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:
 And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties,
 Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,
 That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries. }
 Beauty, and youth, and wealth, and luxury,
 And spritely hope, and short-enduring joy;
 And forceries to raise th' infernal powers,
 And sigils fram'd in planetary hours:
 Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
 And doubts of motley hue, and dark despair;
 Suspensions, and fantastical surmise,
 And jealousy suffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,
 Discolouring all she view'd, in tawny drefs'd;
 Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fist.
 Oppos'd to her, on t' other side advance
 The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
 Minstrels, and music, poetry, and play,
 And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
 All these were painted on the wall, and more:
 With acts and monuments of times before:

And

And others added by prophetic doom,
 And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
 For there th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,
 The court of Venus was in colours drawn:
 Before the palace-gate, in careless drefs,
 And loose array, fat portrefs Idleneſs:
 There, by the fount, Narciffus pin'd alone;
 There Samſon was; with wiſer Solomon,
 And all the mighty names by Love undone. }
 Medea's charms were there, Circean feaſts,
 With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beaſts,
 Here might be ſeen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
 And proweſs, to the power of love ſubmit:
 The ſpreading ſnare for all mankind is laid;
 And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
 The Goddeſs' ſelf ſome noble hand had wrought;
 Smiling ſhe ſeem'd, and full of pleaſing thought:
 From ocean as ſhe firſt began to riſe,
 And ſmooth'd the ruffled ſeas and clear'd the ſkies;
 She trod the brine all bare below the breaſt,
 And the green waves but ill conceal'd the reſt;
 A lute ſhe held; and on her head was ſeen
 A wreath of roſes red, and myrtles green;
 Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
 And, by his mother, ſtood an infant Love,
 With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er;
 His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore, }
 Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deadly ſtore. }
 But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
 With different figures all the ſides were ſpread;

This

This temple, less in form, with equal grace,
 Was imitative of the first in Thrace:
 For that cold region was the lov'd abode,
 And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
 The landscape was a forest wide and bare;
 Where neither beast, nor human kind repair;
 The fowl, that scent afar, the borders fly,
 And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
 A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
 And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
 Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old;
 Headless the most, and hideous to behold:
 A rattling tempest through the branches went,
 That stripp'd them bare, and one sole way they bent.
 Heaven froze above, severe, the clouds congeal,
 And through the chrystal vault appear'd the standing
 hail,

Such was the face without; a mountain stood
 Threatening from high, and overlook'd the wood:
 Beneath the lowring brow, and on a bent,
 The temple stood of Mars armipotent:
 The frame of burnish'd steel, that cast a glare
 From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air.
 A strait long entry to the temple led,
 Blind with high walls; and horror over head:
 Thence issued such a blast, and hollow roar,
 As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;
 In through that door, a northern light there shone;
 'Twas all it had, for windows there were none,

The

The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which, hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries
came,

The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.

A tun about was every pillar there;
A polish'd mirror shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought:
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder
brought. }

There the red anger dar'd the pallid fear;
Next stood hypocrisy, with holy leer;
Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown:
Th' assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.

On t' other side there stood destruction bare;
Unpunish'd rapine, and a waste of war.
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.

Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language base;
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place. }

The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:

With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his fullen soul away.

In midst of all the dome, misfortune fate,
And gloomy discontent, and fell debate,

And

And madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpse, in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd:
The city to the soldier's rage resign'd:
Successful wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made,
All ills of Mars's nature, flame and steel;
The gasping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpen'd faulchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tower was plac'd,
With shouts, and soldiers acclamations grac'd:
A pointed sword hung threatening o'er his head,
Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars's ides, the capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall;
The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.

The

The form of Mars high on a chariot flood,
All sheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the God:
Two geomantic figures were display'd
Above his head, a warrior and a maid;
One when direct, and one when retrograde.

}

Tir'd with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the fides, and on the midst a lawn:
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursued the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calisto there stood manifest of shame,
And, turn'd a bear, the northern star became:
Her son was next, and by peculiar grace
In the cold circle held the second place:
The stag Aëteon in the stream had spy'd
The naked huntress, and, for seeing, dy'd:
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue
The chace, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne too was there to see,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
Th' adjoining fane th' assembled Greeks express'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beast.
Oenides' valour, and his envy'd prize;
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murderess mother; and consuming son;
The Volscian queen extended on the plain;
The treason punish'd, and the traitor slain.

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H

The

The rest were various huntings, well design'd,
And savage beasts destroy'd, of every kind.
The graceful goddess was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
'That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their
queen.

Her legs were buskin'd, and the left before;
In act to shoot, a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a waxing moon, that soon would wane,
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway.
Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose.
All these the painter drew with such command,
'That Nature snatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Asham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of every God,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestow'd.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.

The theatre thus rais'd, the lists enclos'd,
And all with vast magnificence dispos'd,
We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haste to bring
The knights to combat; and their arms to sing.

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

O R,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK III.

THE day approach'd when Fortune should decide
 Th' important enterprize, and give the bride;
 For now, the rivals round the world had fought,
 And each his rival, well appointed, brought.
 The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
 And send the flower of war by public voice;
 That after, or before, were never known
 Such chiefs, as each an army seem'd alone:
 Beside the champions: all of high degree,
 Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry,
 Throng'd to the lists, and envy'd to behold
 The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
 Nor seems it strange; for every noble knight
 Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
 In such a quarrel would be proud to fight.
 There breathes not scarce a man on British ground
 (An isle for love and arms of old renown'd)
 But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
 To Palamon or Arcite sent his name:
 And had the land selected of the best,
 Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.
 A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
 Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name;

Their arms were several, as their nations were,
 But furnish'd all alike with sword and spear.
 Some wore coat armour, imitating scale;
 And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail.
 Some wore a breast-plate and a light jupon,
 Their horses cloth'd with rich caparison:
 Some for defence would leathern bucklers use,
 Of folded hides; and others shields of pruce.
 One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,
 And one a heavy mace to smite the foe;
 One for his legs and knees provided well,
 With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of steel:
 This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
 And that a sleeve embroider'd by his love.
 With Palamon above the rest in place,
 Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
 Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
 The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
 And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
 He look'd a lion with a gloomy stare,
 And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair:
 Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
 Broad-shoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.
 Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
 Were yok'd to draw his car of burnish'd gold.
 Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,
 Conspicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.
 His furcoat was a bear-skin on his back;
 His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven black.

His

His ample forehead bore a coronet
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set:
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and cours'd around his
chair, }
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear:
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks furround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courser, goodly to behold
The trappings of his horse adorn'd with barbarous gold.
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set.
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire:
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue:
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin:
His awful presence did the croud surprize,
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes,
Eyes that confess'd him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flash'd intolerable day.

His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
 And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
 Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
 Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound,
 A laurel wreath'd his temples, fresh and green;
 And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd
 between.

Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
 An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily white.

His hundred knights attend him to the war,
 All arm'd for battle; save their heads were bare.
 Words and devices blaz'd on every shield,
 And pleasing was the terror of the field.
 For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might see,
 Like sparkling stars, though different in degree,
 All for th' increase of arms, and love of chivalry. }
 Before the king tame leopards led the way,
 And troops of lions innocently play.
 So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,
 And beasts in gambols frisk'd before the honest god.

In this array the war of either side
 Through Athens pass'd with military pride.
 At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
 Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the posts
 adorn.

The town was all a jubilee of feasts;
 So Theseus will'd, in honour of his guests;
 Himself with open arms the king embrac'd,
 Then all the rest in their degrees were grac'd.

No harbinger was needful for a night,
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.

I pass the royal treat, nor must relate
The gifts bestow'd, nor how the champions fate:
Who first, or last, or how the knights address'd
Their vows, or who was fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprize;
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes.
The rivals call my Muse another way,
To sing their vigils for th' ensuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night:
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the sun, ere day began to spring;
The tuneful lark already stretch'd her wing,
And, flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing. }

When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took, to the royal lists, his early way, }
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray. }
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,
He thus implor'd with prayers her power divine.
Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliss of men below, and Gods above!
Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddess, thee the storms of winter fly, }
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky, }
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply. }

For thee the lion loaths the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair:
All nature is thy province, life thy care: }
Thou mad'st the world, and dost the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun;
If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,
Have pity, Goddess, for thou know'st the smart.
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow, would be some relief;
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O Goddess, tell thyself what I would say,
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might;
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe profess'd to barren chastity.
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let fate, or partial chance, dispose the rest:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
On whom he favours to confer the prize;

With

With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The fates but only spin the coarser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the sisters cut below your line:
The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But, if you this ambitious prayer deny,
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality,)
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And, I once dead, let him possess her charms.
Thus ended he; then, with observance due,
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddess gave the sign,
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine:
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took:
For, since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To distance driven, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.

Now morn with rosy light had streak'd the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Address'd her early steps to Cynthia's fame,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and odorous gums, and cover'd fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,
Nor wanted aught besides in honour of the moon.

Now

Now while the temple smoak'd with hallow'd steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;
The secret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to Scandal, or obscene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncomb'd, was loosely spread,
A crown of massless oak adorn'd her head:
When to the shrine approach'd, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid
(The rites were such as were observ'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told).
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,
Thus lowly she preferr'd her chaste request.

O Goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth and seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing through the skies the feather'd deaths
were dealt;

As I desire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.

Thy

Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou know'st, I loath the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate:
Where love is duty on the female side;
On their's mere sensual gust, and fought with surly pride.
Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heaven, earth, hell, and every where a queen,
Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love:
Or, if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord, within whose faithful breast
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me best.
But, oh! ev'n that avert! I choose it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chase my prey!
The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid address'd her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright,
Flew off, all sudden, with extinguish'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little space;
Which turn'd self-kindled, and renew'd the blaze;

The

The other victor-flame a moment stood,
Then fell, and lifeless left th' extinguish'd wood;
For ever lost, th' irrevocable light
Forsook the blackening coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue. }

The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies,
Nor knew what signify'd the boding sign,
But found the powers displeas'd, and fear'd the wrath
divine.

Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple
bright.

The power, behold! the power in glory shone,
By her bent bow and her keen arrows known;
The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.
Then gracious thus began: Dismiss thy fear,
And Heaven's unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
More powerful Gods have torn thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doom'd a bride:
The two contending knights are weigh'd above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breast;
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee best.
The fire that once extinct reviv'd again,
Foreshews the love allotted to remain:

Farewell!

Farewell! she said, and vanish'd from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaim'd, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting Goddess thus she pray'd;
Propitious still be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid. }
Then sighing she return'd; but smil'd betwixt,
With hopes and fears, and joys with sorrows mixt.

The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who shar'd the heptarchy of power,
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
T'adore with pagan rites the power armipotent:
Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray:
Strong God of Arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's winter coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honour'd most:
There most; but every-where thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers ev'n the strong:
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my prayer,
If aught I have atchiev'd deserve thy care:
If to my utmost power with sword and shield
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
And, falling in my rank, still kept the field: }

Then

Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustain'd,
That Emily by conquest may be gain'd.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has softened into love:
Now by her blandishments and powerful charms,
When yielded she lay curling in thy arms,
Ev'n by thy shame, if shame it may be call'd,
When Vulcan had thee in his net intrall'd;
O envy'd ignominy, sweet disgrace,
When every God that saw thee wish'd thy place!
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractis'd to persuade:
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myself, lie struggling in the snare:
And she I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well; and pays me with disdain;
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless by thee
Endued by force, I gain the victory;
Then for the fire which warm'd thy generous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains, and equal smart.
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal, be the business of my life;

And

And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,
High on the burnish'd roof, my banner shall be hung:
Rank'd with my champion's bucklers, and below,
With arms revers'd, th' achievements of my foe:
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food
Of incense, and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine;
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
The bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reserv'd for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more; let fate dispose the rest.

The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the close
A hollow groan: a murmuring wind arose;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,
The storm rush'd in, and Arcite stood aghast:
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.

Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet-smelling as accepted sacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aspire
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statue clash'd his arms,

And

And with a fullen sound and feeble cry,
Half funk, and half pronounc'd, the word of victory.
For this, with soul devout, he thank'd the God,
And, of success secure, return'd to his abode.

These vows thus granted, rais'd a strife above,
Betwixt the God of War, and Queen of Love.
She granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.

Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,

And seem'd, unwilling to decide the strife;

Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,

And found a way the difference to compose:

Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,

He seldom does a good with good intent.

Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught

To please both parties, for ill ends, he fought:

For this advantage age from youth has won,

As not to be outridden, though outrun.

By fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,

And with stern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:

Of him disposing in his own abode,

He sooth'd the Goddess, while he gull'd the God:

Cease, daughter, to complain, and stint the strife;

Thy Palamon shall have his promis'd wife:

And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight

With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.

Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place,

Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.

Man feels me, when I press th' etherial plains,

My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.

Mine

Mine is the shipwreck, in a watery sign;
 And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
 Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
 And bitter blasting winds, and poison'd air,
 Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair. }

The throting quinsy 'tis my star appoints,
 And rheumatisms ascend to rack the joints:

When churls rebel against their native prince,

I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;

And, housing in the lion's hateful sign,

Bought senates and deserting troops are mine.

Mine is the privy poisoning; I command

Unkindly seasons, and ungrateful land.

By me kings' palaces are push'd to ground,

And miners crush'd beneath their mines are found.

'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillar'd hall

Fell down, and crush'd the many with the fall.

My looking is the fire of pestilence,

That sweeps at once the people and the prince.

Now weep no more, but trust thy grandfire's art,

Mars shall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.

'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,

The family of Heaven for men should war.

Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither lost his right;

Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.

The management they left to Chronos' care;

Now turn we to th' effect, and sing the war.

In Athens all was pleasure, mirth, and play,

All proper to the spring, and sprightly May:

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I

Which

Which every soul inspir'd with such delight,
 'Twas jesting all the day, and love at night.
 Heaven smil'd, and gladdened was the heart of man;
 And Venus had the world as when it first began.
 At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
 And dreamt the future fight, and early rose.

Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
 As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring:
 At once the crowd arose; confus'd and high
 Ev'n from the heaven was heard a shouting cry; }
 For Mars was early up, and rous'd the sky.
 The Gods came downward to behold the wars,
 Sharpening their fights, and leaning from their stars.
 The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
 For battle by the busy groom prepar'd,
 Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
 Clattering of armour, furbish'd for the field.
 Crowds to the castle mounted up the street,
 Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet:
 The greedy fight might there devour the gold
 Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:
 And polish'd steel that cast the view aside,
 And crested morions, with their plummy pride.
 Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
 In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.
 One lac'd the helm, another held the lance:
 A third the shining buckler did advance.
 The courser paw'd the ground with restless feet,
 And snorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.

The

The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,
And nails for loosen'd spears, and thongs for shields }
provide.

The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their
hands.

The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast;
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst: the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few;
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk:
Faction, and favouring this or t' other side,
As their strong fancy or weak reason guide:
Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend,
His rising muscles and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.
All spoke as partial favour mov'd the mind:
And, safe themselves, at others' cost divin'd.
Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;

And passing through th' obsequious guards, he fate
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;
There, for the two contending knights he sent:
Arm'd cap-a-pee, with reverence low they bent;
He smil'd on both, and with superior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people press on every side, to see
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms bespeaks the knights and listening
crowd.

Our sovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,
He modifies his first severe decree!
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death should terminate their strife;
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life:
But issues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That flings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be banish'd from the field; that none shall dare
With shortned sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The tourney is allow'd but one career,
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear,

But

But knights unhors'd may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,
At either barrier plac'd; nor (captives made)
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
The chief of either side, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young
Fight each his fill with swords and maces long.

The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent:
Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets found,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the windows roll'd.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread;
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side.
Next after these, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshal'd in degree.
Thus through the southern gate they take their way,
And at the list arriv'd ere prime of day.

There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And, wheeling East and West, before their many ride,
Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen and Emily:
Next these the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies plac'd,
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rush'd at once a rude promiscuous crowd:
The guards and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.
Now chang'd the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds forsaking seas more softly blow;
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the God of war,
Proud Arcite entering arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and display'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron God.

At that self moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising-sun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From East to West, look all the world around,
Two troops so match'd were never to be found:
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature siz'd; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye could no distinction make,
Where lay th' advantage, or what side to take.

Thus rang'd, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answer'd to their names:

For

For so the king decreed, to shun the care,
 The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
 The tale was just, and then the gates were clos'd;
 And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
 The heralds last retir'd, and loudly cry'd,
 The fortune of the field be fairly try'd.

At this, the challenger with fierce defy
 His trumpet sounds; the challeng'd makes reply:
 With clangor rings the field, resounds the vaulted
 sky. }

Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the rest,
 Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest;
 They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
 And spurring see decrease the middle space.
 A cloud of smoke envelops either host,
 And all at once the combatants are lost:
 Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
 Coursers with coursers jostling, men with men:
 As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,
 Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
 They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
 Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly sight.
 Two troops in fair array one moment show'd,
 The next, a field with fallen bodies strow'd:
 Not half the number in their seats are found;
 But men and steeds lie groveling on the ground.
 The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
 The steeds without their riders scour the field.
 The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
 The glittering faulchions cast a gleaming light:

Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound:
 Out spins the streaming blood, and dies the ground.
 The mighty maces with such haste descend,
 They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend,
 This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
 Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:
 That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
 And floundering throws the rider o'er his head.
 One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
 One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
 This halting, this disabled with his wound,
 In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
 Where by the king's award he must abide:
 There goes a captive led on t' other side.
 By fits they cease; and, leaning on the lance,
 Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
 Full oft the rivals met, and neither spar'd
 His utmost force, and each forgot to ward.
 The head of this was to the saddle bent,
 The other backward to the crupper sent:
 Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
 Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.
 So deep their faulchions bite, that every stroke
 Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and
 took.

Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
 Like adamant and steel they meet again.

So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood,
 A famish'd lion issuing from the wood
 Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.

Each

Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fasten'd on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come arm'd between, and both to distance
drive.

At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to West was far declin'd,
And both afresh in mortal battle join'd,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For, turning short, he struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of th' unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he stagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.

Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!

The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,

Bad cease the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,
And round the royal lists the heralds cry'd,
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.

The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is own'd ev'n by the Gods above,
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the powers who favour tyranny;
And all the standing army of the sky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping on the lists distill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman most,
And, in her champion foil'd, the cause of Love is lost,
Till Saturn said, Fair daughter, now be still,
The blustering fool has satisfy'd his will;
His boon is given; his knight has gain'd the day,
But lost the prize, th' arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free.
Now while the heralds run the lists around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth resound;
A miracle (nor less it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow pall'd.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride:

Bare-

Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the salutations of the crowd.
Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on
Where Theseus fate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;
Then passing to the saddle-bow he bent:
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way):
Just then, from earth sprung out a flashing fire,
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seiz'd with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pommel cast the knight:
Forward he flew, and, pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little space,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand: they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had prest,
All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breast.
Him still entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.
At length he wak'd, and, with a feeble cry,
The word he first pronounc'd was Emily.

Mean time the king, though inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town returned.

Attended

Attended by the chiefs who fought the field
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd).
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladdened all the warrior-train,
Though most were forely wounded, none were slain.
The surgeons soon despoil'd them of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of
sage.

The king in person visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.
None was disgrac'd; for falling is no shame;
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The venturous knight is from the saddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own,
If crowds and palms the conquering side adorn.
The victor under better stars was born:
The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor overpower'd with arms deserts his cause;
Unsham'd, though foil'd, he does the best he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.

Thus Theseus smil'd on all with equal grace;
And each was set according to his place.
With ease were reconcil'd the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.

At length they took their leave, the time expir'd;
Well pleas'd, and to their several homes retir'd.

Mean while the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worfe, and mocks the leeches
cares;

Swoln is his breast; his inward pains increase,
All means are us'd, and all without success.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping, will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mold of nature's fabric is destroy'd,
Her vessels discompos'd, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begin to swell:
All out of frame is every secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Those breathing organs thus within oppress,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandon'd life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmost region batter'd and destroy'd,
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, against right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was past,
Conscience (that of all physic works the last)
Caus'd him to send for Emily in haste.

With

With her, at his desire, came Palamon;
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.
No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most;
But to your service I bequeath my ghost;
Which from this mortal body when unt'y'd,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious, and your steps attend:
How I have lov'd, excuse my faltering tongue,
My spirits feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die
Because I lose my charming Emily:
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power,
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour!
What greater curse could envious fortune give,
Than just to die, when I began to live!
Vain men, how vanishing a bliss we crave,
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, O never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not blest'd before my death.
Farewel; but take me dying in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah! could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
Am pleas'd to die; but hear me speak my last,

Ah!

Ah! my sweet foe, for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds,
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt, should heaven my life prolong,
I should return to justify my wrong:
For, while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursued his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife:
Nor I, but as I lov'd; yet all combin'd,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justify'd his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight,
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good;
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
He loves you too, with such an holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vow'd affections both have often try'd,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then, by my love's inviolable band,
By my long suffering, and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.

This

This was his last; for death came on amain,
 And exercis'd below his iron reign;
 Then upward to the seat of life he goes:
 Sense fled before him, what he touch'd he froze:
 Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
 Though less and less of Emily he saw;
 So, speechless, for a little space he lay;
 Then grasp'd the hand he held, and sigh'd his soul away.

But whither went his soul, let such relate
 Who search the secrets of the future state:
 Divines can say but what themselves believe;
 Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative:
 For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
 And faith itself be lost in certainty.
 To live uprightly then is sure the best,
 To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.
 The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,
 Who better live than we, though less they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears;
 Silent, he wept, ashamed to shew his tears:
 Emilia shriek'd but once, and then, oppress'd
 With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:
 Till Theseus in his arms convey'd with care,
 Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.
 'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
 Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
 When just approaching to the nuptial state.
 But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
 That all at once it falls, and cannot last.

The

The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd so late, becomes the scene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Nor greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deform'd their hoary hair,
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tare.
Why would'st thou go, with one consent they cry,
When thou had'st gold enough, and Emily.

Theseus himself, who should have cheer'd the grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief.

Old Egeus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known:
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a steady state;
Good after ill, and after pain delight;
Alternate like the scenes of day and night:
Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind what happens let us bear,
Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our
care.

Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Ev'n kings but play; and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfy'd,
And so they would have been, had Theseus dy'd.

But he, their king, was labouring in his mind,
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead design'd. }
And, after long debate, at last he found
(As love itself had mark'd the spot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conscious land,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:
That where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.

This once resolv'd, the peasants were enjoin'd
Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, split, and lay the fuel on a row,
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepar'd,
On which the lifeless body should be rear'd,
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes array'd.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle spread.
A sword keen-edg'd within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field:
Bare was his manly visage on the bier:
Menac'd his countenance; ev'n in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in solemn state, a public sight.
Groans, cries, and howlings, fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.

Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dew'd with gushing tears:
His auburn locks on either shoulder flow'd,
Which to the funeral of his friend he vow'd:
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.
And, that the princely obsequies might be
Perform'd according to his high degree,
The steed, that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapp'd with polish'd steel, all shining bright,
And cover'd with th' achievements of the knight. }
The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnish'd gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And, weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they march'd, and often staid,
And through the master-street the corpse convey'd.
The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And ev'n the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right side of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl of work divine,
With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy
wine.

Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,
And after him appear'd th' illustrious train.
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With cover'd fire, the funeral pile to light.

With high devotion was the service made,
 And all the rites of pagan-honour paid:
 So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
 With vigour drawn, must fend the shaft below.
 The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
 With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strow'd.
 The fabric seem'd a wood of rising green,
 With sulphur and bitumen cast between,
 To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
 And mountain ash, the mother of the spear;
 The mourner-yew and builder oak were there:
 The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
 Hard box, and linden of a softer grain,
 And laurels, which the Gods for conquering chiefs
 ordain.

How they were rank'd, shall rest untold by me,
 With nameless nymphs that liv'd in every tree;
 Nor how the dryads, or the woodland train,
 Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
 Nor how the birds to foreign seats repair'd,
 Or beasts, that bolted out, and saw the forest bar'd:
 Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghastly fright
 Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.

The straw, as first I said, was laid below:
 Of chips and sere-wood was the second row;
 The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;
 The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,
 And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array;
 In midst of which, embalm'd, the body lay.

The

The service fung, the maid with mourning eyes
The stubble fir'd; the smouldering flames arise:
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;
But what she spoke, recover'd from her swoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dress;
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hissing flames receive, and hungry lick the food. }
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice refound;
Hail, and farewell, they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clattering shields;
The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were play'd at new returning light;
Who naked wrestled best, besmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haste to my long story's end.

I pass the rest; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long since to Thebes return'd:
When, by the Grecians' general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament:

Among the laws that pass'd, it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage should be freed;
Reserving homage to th' Athenian throne,
To which the sovereign summon'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:
So call'd, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And first soft whispers through th' assembly went:
With silent wonder then they watch'd th' event:
All hush'd, the king arose with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face.
At length he sigh'd; and, having first prepar'd
Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.

The cause and spring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth the golden chain of love:
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent.
Fire, flood, and earth, and air, by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.
The chain still holds; for, though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has plac'd,
How long those perishable forms shall last:
Nor can they last beyond the time assign'd
By that all-seeing and all-making mind:
Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
But never pass th' appointed destiny.

So men oppress'd, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.
Then, since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unalter'd cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole;
Who gives us life and animating soul:
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beasts, and man; and, as our organs are,
We more or less of his perfection share.
But by a long descent, th' ethereal fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass:
This law th' Omniscient Power was pleas'd to give,
That every kind should by succession live:
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays;
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forsaken of their springs; and leave their channels dry.
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, form'd, the little heart begins to beat;

Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then, helpless, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and, issuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began:
Reckless of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne:
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.
Some thus; but thousands more in flower of age:
For few arrive to run the latter stage.
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelm'd beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordain'd to die,
To make a virtue of necessity.
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well sustain;
And could we choose the time, and choose aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But serv'd our friends, and well secur'd our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose:
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief.
Enjoying while we live the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.

Then

Then round our death-bed every friend should run,
And joyous of our conquest early won:
While the malicious world with envious tears
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the Gods decreed? }
With grief as just, a friend may be deplor'd,
From a foul prison to free air restor'd.
Ought he to thank his kinsmen or his wife,
Could tears recal him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost;
And, worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but, after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy?
To thank the gracious Gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point th' extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renew'd,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propose that Palamon shall be
In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gain'd th' assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deserv'd, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault; since Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free:

If you, fair sister, ratify th' accord,
And take him for your husband and your lord,
'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race:
And were he less, yet years of service past
From grateful souls exact reward at last:
Pity is Heaven's and your's; nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind.
He said; she blush'd; and, as o'eraw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theseus what she gave the knight.
Then turning to the Theban thus he said;
Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command;
And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight;
And bless'd with nuptial bliss the sweet laborious night. }
Eros, and Anteros, on either side,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above,
Shower'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discolour'd with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceiv'd.
Thus Heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.
So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success.

T H E
C O C K A N D T H E F O X :

O R,

T H E T A L E O F T H E N U N ' S P R I E S T .

TH E R E liv'd, as authors tell, in days of yore,
 A widow somewhat old, and very poor:
 Deep in her cell her cottage lonely stood,
 Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.
 This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
 Since last she laid her husband in the ground,
 A simple sober life, in patience, led,
 And had but just enough to buy her bread:
 But huswifing the little Heaven had lent,
 She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
 And pinch'd her belly, with her daughters two,
 To bring the year about with much ado.

The cattle in her homestead were three fows,
 An ewe call'd Mally, and three brinded cows.
 Her parlour-window stuck with herbs around,
 Of savoury smell; and rushes strew'd the ground.
 A maple-dresser in her hall she had,
 On which full many a slender meal she made;
 For no delicious morsel pass'd her throat;
 According to her cloth she cut her coat:
 No poignant sauce she knew, nor costly treat,
 Her hunger gave a relish to her meat;

A sparing

A sparing diet did her health assure;
Or, sick, a pepper posset was her cure.
Before the day was done, her work she sped,
And never went by candle-light to bed:
With exercise she sweat ill humours out,
Her dancing was not hinder'd by the gout.
Her poverty was glad; her heart content;
Nor knew she what the spleen or vapours meant.

Of wine she never tasted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely cheer:
Brown bread, and milk (but first she skim'd her bowls),
And rashers of sing'd bacon on the coals.
On holy days an egg, or two at most;
But her ambition never reach'd to roast.

A yard she had with pales inclos'd about,
Some high, some low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homestead, liv'd, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whose singing did surpass
The merry notes of organs at the mass.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And sooner than the matten-bell was rung,
He clap'd his wings upon his roost, and sung:
For when degrees fifteen ascended right,
By sure instinct he knew 'twas one at night.
High was his comb, and coral-red withal,
In dents embattled like a castle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and shone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet:

White

White were his nails, like silver to behold,
His body glittering like the burnish'd gold.
This gentle cock, for solace of his life,
Six misses had, besides his lawful wife;
Scandal, that spares no king, though ne'er so good,
Says, they were all of his own flesh and blood,
His sisters both by fire and mother's side;
And sure their likeness shew'd them near ally'd.
But make the worst, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When incest is for interest of a nation,
'Tis made no sin by holy dispensation.
Some lines have been maintain'd by this alone,
Which by their common ugliness are known.

But passing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet was the sovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feather'd her a hundred times a day:
And she, that was not only passing fair,
But was withal discreet, and debonair,
Resolv'd the passive doctrine to fulfil,
Though loth; and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the church's precept had injoin'd. }
Ev'n since she was a se'nnight old, they say, }
Was chaste and humble to her dying day, }
Nor chick nor hen was known to disobey. }

By this her husband's heart she did obtain;
What cannot beauty, join'd with virtue, gain!

She

She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walk'd, went pecking by his side;
If, spurning up the ground, he sprung a corn,
The tribute in his bill to her was borne.
But, oh! what joy it was to hear him sing
In summer, when the day began to spring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
“ Solus cum sola,” then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts
Were bred to speak, and sing, and learn the liberal arts.

It happ'd that, perching on the parlour-beam
Amidst his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Just at the dawn; and sigh'd, and groan'd so fast,
As every breath he drew would be his last.
Dame Partlet, ever nearest to his side,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cry'd
For help from Gods and men: and fore aghast
She peck'd and pull'd, and waken'd him at last.
Dear heart, said she, for love of Heaven, declare
Your pain, and make me partner of your care.
You groan, Sir, ever since the morning-light,
As something had disturb'd your noble spright.

And madam, well I might, said Chanticleer,
Never was shrovetide cock in such a fear,
Ev'n still I run all over in a sweat,
My princely senses not recover'd yet.
For such a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be shent:
It bodes I shall have wars and woeful strife,
Or in a loathsome dungeon end my life.

Know;

Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breast,
 That in our yard I saw a murderous beast,
 That on my body would have made arrest. }
 With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow;
 His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
 Tipp'd was his tail, and both his pricking ears
 Were black; and much unlike his other hairs:
 The rest, in shape a beagle's whelp throughout,
 With broader forehead, and a sharper snout:
 Deep in his front were sunk his glowing eyes,
 That yet methinks I see him with surprize.
 Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy sweat,
 And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.
 Now fy for shame, quoth she, by Heaven above,
 Thou hast for ever lost thy lady's love;
 No woman can endure a recreant knight,
 He must be bold by day, and free by night:
 Our sex desires a husband or a friend,
 Who can our honour and his own defend;
 Wife, hardy, secret, liberal of his purse:
 A fool is nauseous, but a coward worse:
 No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight.
 How dar'st thou talk of love, and dar'st not fight?
 How dar'st thou tell thy dame thou art afraid?
 Hast thou no manly heart, and hast a beard?
 If aught from fearful dreams may be divin'd,
 They signify a cock of dunghill kind.
 All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
 Are from repletion and complexion bred;

From

From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,
These foolish fancies, you have had to-night,
Are certain symptoms (in the canting stile)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gall that in your stomach floats,
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.

Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,
With rheums oppress'd we sink in rivers drown'd.

More I could say, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wise,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preserve your body sound,
And purge the peccant humours that abound.
I should be loth to lay you on a bier;
And though there lives no 'pothecary near,
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,
And save long bills, and a damn'd doctor's fees.

Two soveraign herbs which I by practice know,
 And both at hand (for in our yard they grow);
 On peril of my soul shall rid you wholly
 Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
 You must both purge and vomit; but obey,
 And for the love of heaven make no delay.
 Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
 Beware the sun when in a vernal sign;
 For when he mounts exalted in the ram,
 If then he finds your body in a flame,
 Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
 A tertian ague is at least your lot.
 Perhaps a fever (which the Gods forefend)
 May bring your youth to some untimely end;
 And therefore, sir, as you desire to live,
 A day or two before your laxative,
 Take just three worms, nor under nor above,
 Because the Gods unequal numbers love.
 These digestives prepare you for your purge;
 Of fumetery, centaury, and spurge,
 And of ground-ivy add a leaf or two,
 All which within our yard or garden grow.
 Eat these, and be, my lord, of better cheer;
 Your father's son was never born to fear.

Madam, quoth he, grammercy for your care,
 But Cato, whom you quoted, you may spare:
 'Tis true, a wife and worthy man he seems,
 And (as you say) gave no belief to dreams:
 But other men of more authority,
 And, by th' immortal powers, as wise as he,
 Vol. XX, L Maintain,

Maintain, with founder sense, that dreams forebode;
For Homer plainly says they come from God.
Nor Cato said it: but some modern fool
Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at school.

Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreshow
Th' events of things, and future weal or woe:
Some truths are not by reason to be try'd,
But we have sure experience for our guide.
An ancient author, equal with the best,
Relates this tale of dreams among the rest.

Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On some far pilgrimage together went.
It happen'd so that, when the sun was down,
They just arriv'd by twilight at a town:
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feast, and every inn so full,
That no void room in chamber, or on ground;
And but one sorry bed was to be found:
And that so little it would hold but one,
Though till this hour they never lay alone.

So were they forc'd to part; one stay'd behind,
His fellow sought what lodging he could find:
At last he found a stall where oxen stood,
And that he rather chose than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his ease, well litter'd was the floor.

His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,
Was weary, and without a rocker slept:
Supine he snor'd; but in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appear'd before his sight,

Who,

Who, with a ghastly look and doleful cry,
 Said, Help me, brother, or this night I die:
 Arise, and help, before all help be vain,
 Or in an ox's stall I shall be slain.

Rous'd from his rest, he waken'd in a start,
 Shivering with horror, and with aking heart;
 At length to cure himself by reason tries;
 'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies? }
 So thinking, chang'd his side, and clos'd his eyes. }
 His dream returns; his friend appears again: }
 The murderers come, now help, or I am slain: }
 'Twas but a vision still, and visions are but vain. }
 He dreamt the third: but now his friend appear'd
 Pale, naked, pierc'd with wounds, with blood besmear'd:
 Thrice warn'd, awake, said he; relief is late,
 The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
 Tardy of aid, unseal thy heavy eyes,
 Awake, and with the dawning day arise:
 Take to the western gate thy ready way,
 For by that passage they my corpse convey:
 My corpse is in a tumbril laid, among
 The filth and ordure, and inclos'd with dung:
 That cart arrest, and raise a common cry;
 For sacred hunger of my gold, I die:
 Then shew'd his grievous wound: and last he drew
 A piteous sigh; and took a long adieu.

The frighted friend arose by break of day,
 And found the stall where late his fellow lay.
 Then of his impious host inquiring more,
 Was answer'd that his guest was gone before:

Muttering, he went, said he, by morning-light,
And much complain'd of his ill rest by night.
'This rais'd suspicion in the pilgrim's mind;
Because all hosts are of an evil kind,
And oft to share the spoils with robbers join'd.

His dream confirm'd his thought: with troubled look
Straight to the western gate his way he took;
'There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carry'd compost forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim saw, he stretch'd his throat,
And cry'd out *murder* with a yelling note.
My murder'd fellow in this cart lies dead,
Vengeance and justice on the villain's head.
Ye magistrates, who sacred laws dispense,
On you I call, to punish this offence.

The word thus given, within a little space,
'The mob came roaring out, and throng'd the place.
All in a trice they cast the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murder'd body found;
Though breathless, warm, and reeking from the
wound.

Good heaven, whose darling attribute we find
Is boundless grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wondrous ways reveals in open light:
Murder may pass unpunish'd for a time,
But tardy justice will o'ertake the crime.
And oft a speedier pain the guilty feels:
'The hue and cry of heaven pursues him at the heels,
Fresh

Fresh from the fact; as in the present case,
 The criminals are seiz'd upon the place:
 Carter and host confronted face to face.
 Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
 On engines they distend their tortur'd joints:
 So was confession forc'd, th' offence was known,
 And public justice on th' offenders done.

Here may you see that visions are to dread;
 And in the page that follows this, I read
 Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
 Induc'd in partnership to cross the main:
 Waiting till willing winds their sails supply'd,
 Within a trading-town they long abide,
 Full fairly situate on a haven's side.

One evening it befel, that looking out,
 The wind they long had wish'd was come about:
 Well pleas'd they went to rest; and if the gale
 Till morn continued, both resolv'd to fail.
 But as together in a bed they lay,
 The younger had a dream at break of day.
 A man he thought stood frowning at his side:
 Who warn'd him for his safety to provide,
 Nor put to sea, but safe on shore abide.
 I come, thy genius, to command thy stay;
 Trust not the winds, for fatal is the day,
 And death unhop'd attends the watery way.

The vision said: and vanish'd from his sight:
 The dreamer waken'd in a mortal fright:
 Then pull'd his drowsy neighbour, and declar'd
 What in his slumber he had seen and heard.

His friend smil'd scornful, and with proud contempt
 Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
 Stay, who will stay: for me no fears restrain,
 Who follow Mercury the god of gain;
 Let each man do as to his fancy seems,
 I wait not, I, till you have better dreams.
 Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes;
 When monarch reason sleeps, this mimic wakes:
 Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
 A mob of coblers, and a court of kings:
 Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad:
 Both are the reasonable soul run mad;
 And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
 That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
 Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind
 Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
 The nurse's legends are for truths receiv'd,
 And the man dreams but what the boy believ'd.

Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
 The night restores our actions done by day;
 As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.
 In short, the farce of dreams is of a piece,
 Chimeras all; and more absurd, or less:
 You, who believe in tales, abide alone;
 Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.

Thus while he spoke, he heard the shouting crew
 That call'd aboard, and took his last adieu.
 The vessel went before a merry gale,
 And for quick passage put on every sail:

But

THE COCK AND THE FOX. 151

But when least fear'd, and ev'n in open day,
The mischief overtook her in the way:
Whether she sprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether she was overfet with wind,
Or that some rock below her bottom rent;
But down at once with all her crew she went:
Her fellow ships from far her loss descry'd;
But only she was sunk, and all were safe beside.

By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and visions are not always vain:
But if, dear Partlet, you are still in doubt,
Another tale shall make the former out.
Kenelm the son of Kenulph, Mercia's king,
Whose holy life the legends loudly sing,
Warn'd in a dream his murder did foretel
From point to point as after it befel;
All circumstances to his nurse he told
(A wonder from a child of seven years old):
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treason counsel'd him to guard his life;
But close to keep the secret in his mind,
For a boy's vision small belief would find.
The pious child, by promise bound, obey'd,
Nor was the fatal murder long delay'd:
By Quenda slain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his sister's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede,
Which at your better leisure you may read.

Macrobius too relates the vision sent
To the great Scipio, with the fam'd event:

Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often prophecies.

Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his vision did forget,
Could word for word the wondrous dream repeat.
Nor less of patriarch Joseph understand,
Who by a dream enslav'd th' Egyptian land,
The years of plenty and of dearth foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they sold.
Nor must th' exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whose dream presag'd his hanging lot.

And did not Cræsus the same death foresee,
Rais'd in his vision on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmost pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he dy'd;
Well was he warn'd from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warn'd in vain:
He dar'd the dream, and by his fatal foe was slain.

Much more I know, which I forbear to speak,
For see the ruddy day begins to break;
Let this suffice, that plainly I foresee
My dream was bad, and bodes adversity:
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only serve to make the well-man sick:
Of these his gain the sharp physician makes,
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes:
They not correct, but poison all the blood,
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all;
With every work of 'pothecary's hall,

These

These melancholy matters I forbear:

But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and swear,

That when I view the beauties of thy face,

I fear not death, nor dangers, nor disgrace:

So may my soul have bliss, as when I spy

The scarlet red about thy partridge eye,

While thou art constant to thy own true knight,

While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,

All sorrows at thy presence take their flight.

For true it is, as "in principio,

"Mulier est hominis confusio."

Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,

That woman is to man his sovereign bliss.

For when by night I feel your tender side,

Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,

Yet I have such a solace in my mind,

That all my boding cares are cast behind;

And ev'n already I forget my dream:

He said, and downward flew from off the beam.

For day-light now began apace to spring,

The thrush to whistle, and the lark to sing.

Then crowing clapp'd his wings, th' appointed call,

To chuck his wives together in the hall.

By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,

And Chanticleer went strutting out before,

With royal courage, and with heart so light,

As shew'd he scorn'd the visions of the night.

Now roaming in the yard he spurn'd the ground,

And gave to Partlet the first grain he found.

Then

Then often feather'd her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day:
And took by turns and gave so much delight,
Her sisters pin'd with envy at the sight.
He chuck'd again, when other corns he found,
And scarcely deign'd to set a foot to ground.
But swagger'd like a lord about his hall,
And his seven wives came running at his call.

'Twas now the month in which the world began
(If March beheld the first created man):
And since the vernal equinox, the sun,
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;
When casting up his eyes against the light,
Both month, and day, and hour, he measur'd right;
And told more truly, than th' Epheris:
For art may err, but nature cannot miss.

Thus numbering times and seasons in his breast,
His second crowing the third hour confess'd.
Then turning, said to Partlet, See, my dear,
How lavish nature has adorn'd the year;
How the pale primrose and blue violet spring,
And birds essay their throats diffus'd to sing:
All these are ours; and I with pleasure see
Man strutting on two legs, and aping me:
An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpish frame,
Endow'd with fewer particles of flame:
Our dame sits couring o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw fresh air, and nature's works admire:
And ev'n this day in more delight abound,
Than, since I was an egg, I ever found.

The time shall come when Chanticleer shall with
 His words unsaid, and hate his boasted bliss:
 The crested bird shall by experience know,
 Jove made not him his master-piece below;
 And learn the latter end of joy is woe.
 The vessel of his bliss to dregs is run,
 And Heaven will have him taste his other tun.

Ye wise, draw near, and hearken to my tale,
 Which proves that oft the proud by flattery fall:
 The legend is as true I undertake
 As Tristran is, and Launcelot of the lake:
 Which all our ladies in such reverence hold,
 As if in book of martyrs it were told.

A fox full-fraught with seeming sanctity,
 That fear'd an oath, but, like the devil, would lie;
 Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy leer,
 And durst not sin before he said his prayer;
 This pious cheat, that never suck'd the blood,
 Nor chew'd the flesh of lambs, but when he cou'd;
 Had pass'd three summers in the neighbouring wood:
 And musing long, whom next to circumvent,
 On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent:
 And in his high imagination cast,
 By stratagem to gratify his taste.

The plot contriv'd, before the break of day,
 Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way;
 The pale was next, but proudly with a bound
 He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground:
 Yet, fearing to be seen, within a bed
 Of coleworts he conceal'd his wily head;

Then

Then sculk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,
(As murderers use) to perpetrate his crime.

O hypocrite, ingenious to destroy,
O traitor, worse than Sinon was to Troy;
O vile subverter of the Gallic reign,
More false than Gano was to Charlemaign!
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour
Didst thou forsake the safety of thy bower:
Better for thee thou hadst believ'd thy dream,
And not that day descended from the beam!

But here the doctors eagerly dispute:
Some hold predestination absolute:
Some clerks maintain, that Heaven at first foresees,
And in the virtue of foresight decrees.
If this be so, then prescience binds the will;
And mortals are not free to good or ill:
For what he first foresaw, he must ordain,
Or its eternal prescience may be vain:
As bad for us as prescience had not been:
For first, 'or last, he's author of the sin.
And who says that, let the blaspheming man
Say worse ev'n of the devil, if he can.
For how can that eternal Power be just
To punish man, who sins because he must?
Or, how can he reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us; but first decreed.

I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin and holy Austin can;
If prescience can determine actions so
That we must do, because he did foreknow,

Or that, foreknowing, yet our choice is free,
 Not forc'd to sin by strict necessity;
 This strict necessity they simple call,
 Another sort there is conditional.
 The first so binds the will, that things foreknown
 By spontaneity, not choice, are done.
 Thus galley-slaves tug willing at their oar,
 Content to work, in prospect of the shore;
 But would not work at all if not constrain'd before. }
 That other does not liberty constrain,
 But man may either act, or may refrain.
 Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,
 And forc'd it not, though he foresaw the will.
 Freedom was first bestow'd on human race,
 And prescience only held the second place.

If he could make such agents wholly free,
 I not dispute, the point 's too high for me;
 For heaven's unfathom'd power what man can sound,
 Or put to his Omnipotence a bound?
 He made us to his image, all agree;
 That image is the soul, and that must be, }
 Or not the Maker's image, or be free.
 But whether it were better man had been
 By nature bound to good, not free to sin,
 I wave, for fear of splitting on a rock.
 The tale I tell is only of a cock;
 Who had not run the hazard of his life,
 Had he believ'd his dream, and not his wife:
 For women, with a mischief to their kind,
 Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.

A woman's

A woman's counsel brought us first to woe,
 And made her man his paradise forego,
 Where at heart's ease he liv'd; and might have been
 As free from sorrow as he was from sin.
 For what the devil had their sex to do,
 That, born to folly, they presum'd to know,
 And could not see the serpent in the grass?
 But I myself presume, and let it pass.

Silence in times of suffering is the best,
 'Tis dangerous to disturb an hornet's nest.
 In other authors you may find enough,
 But all they say of dames is idle stuff.
 Legends of lying wits together bound,
 The wife of Bath would throw them to the ground;
 These are the words of Chanticleer, not mine,
 I honour dames, and think their sex divine.

Now to continue what my tale begun;
 Lay madam Partlet basking in the sun,
 Breast-high in sand: her sisters, in a row,
 Enjoy'd the beams above, the warmth below.
 The cock, that of his flesh was ever free,
 Sung merrier than the mermaid in the sea:
 And so beset, that as he cast his eye,
 Among the coleworts on a butterfly,
 He saw false Reynard where he lay full low:
 I need not swear he had no list to crow:
 But cry'd, cock, cock, and gave a sudden start,
 As fore dismay'd and frightened at his heart;
 For birds and beasts, inform'd by nature, know
 Kinds opposite to theirs, and fly their foe.

So Chanticleer, who never saw a fox,
Yet shunn'd him as a sailor shuns the rocks.

But the false loon, who could not work his will
By open force, employ'd his flattering skill;
I hope, my lord, said he, I not offend;
Are you afraid of me, that am your friend?
I were a beast indeed to do you wrong,
I, who have lov'd and honour'd you so long:
Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a false alarm,
For on my soul I never meant you harm.
I come no spy, nor as a traitor press,
To learn the secrets of your soft recess:
Far be from Reynard so profane a thought,
But by the sweetness of your voice was brought:
For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard
The song as of an angel in the yard;
A song that would have charm'd th' infernal Gods,
And banish'd horror from the dark abodes;
Had Orpheus sung it in the nether sphere,
So much the hymn had pleas'd the tyrant's ear,
The wife had been detain'd, to keep the husband there. }

My lord, your fire familiarly I knew,
A peer deserving such a son as you:
He, with your lady-mother, (whom Heaven rest)
Has often grac'd my house, and been my guest:
To view his living features, does me good;
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood;
And in my cottage should be proud to see
The worthy heir of my friend's family.

But

But since I speak of finging, let me say,
 As with an upright heart I safely may,
 That, fave yourself, there breathes not on the ground
 One like your father for a silver-sound.
 So sweetly would he wake the winter-day,
 That matrons to the church mistook their way,
 And thought they heard the merry organ play.
 And he, to raise his voice with artful care,
 (What will not beaux attempt to please the fair?)
 On tiptoe stood to sing with greater strength,
 And stretch'd his comely neck at all the length:
 And while he strain'd his voice to pierce the skies,
 As faints in raptures use, would shut his eyes,
 That the sound striving through the narrow throat,
 His winking might avail to mend the note.
 By this, in song, he never had his peer,
 From sweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
 Not Maro's muse, who sung the mighty man,
 Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a swan,
 Your ancestors proceed from race divine:
 From Brennus and Belinus is your line;
 Who gave to sovereign Rome such loud alarms,
 That ev'n the priests were not excus'd from arms.
 Besides, a famous monk of modern times
 Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes,
 That of a parish-priest the son and heir,
 (When sons of priests were from the proverb clear)
 Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
 And either lam'd his legs, or struck him blind;

For

For which the clerk his father was disgrac'd,
 And in his benefice another plac'd.
 Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,
 Yet for the sake of sweet faint charity;
 Make hills and dales, and earth and heaven rejoice,
 And emulate your father's angel voice.

The cock was pleas'd to hear him speak so fair,
 And proud beside, as solar people are;
 Nor could the treason from the truth descry,
 So was he ravish'd with this flattery:
 So much the more, as, from a little elf,
 He had a high opinion of himself;
 Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,
 Concluding all the world was made for him.

Ye princes rais'd by poets to the Gods,
 And Alexander'd up in lying odes,
 Believe not every flattering knave's report,
 There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
 And he shall be receiv'd with more regard
 And listen'd to, than modest truth is heard.

This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,
 Stood high upon his toes, and clapp'd his wings;
 Then stretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his eyes,
 Ambitious, as he fought th' Olympic prize.
 But, while he pain'd himself to raise his note,
 False Reynard rush'd, and caught him by the throat.
 Then on his back he laid the precious load,
 And fought his wonted shelter of the wood;
 Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,
 Of all unheeded, and pursued by none.

Alas, what stay is there in human state,
 Or who can shun inevitable fate?
 The doom was written, the decree was past,
 Ere the foundations of the world were cast!
 In Aries though the sun exalted stood,
 His patron-planet to procure his good;
 Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
 In Libra rais'd, oppos'd the same degree:
 The rays both good and bad, of equal power,
 Each thwarting other made a mingled hour.

On Friday morn he dreamt this direful dream,
 Cross to the worthy native, in his scheme!
 Ah blissful Venus, Goddess of delight,
 How could'st thou suffer thy devoted knight,
 On thy own day to fall by foe oppress'd,
 The wight of all the world who serv'd thee best?
 Who, true to love, was all for recreation,
 And minded not the work of propagation.
 Gaufride, who could'st so well in rhyme complain
 The death of Richard with an arrow slain,
 Why had not I thy Muse, or thou my heart,
 To sing this heavy dirge with equal art!
 That I like thee on Friday might complain;
 For on that day was Cœur de Lion slain.

Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
 Were sent to heaven by woful Trojan dames,
 When Pyrrhus tofs'd on high his burnish'd blade,
 And offer'd Priam to his father's shade,
 Than for the cock the widow'd poultry made.

}
 Fair

Fair Partlet first, when he was borne from fight,
 With soveraign shrieks bewail'd her captive knight:
 Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
 When Asdrubal her husband lost his life,
 When she beheld the smouldering flames ascend,
 And all the Punic glories at an end:
 Willing into the fires she plung'd her head,
 With greater ease than others seek their bed.
 Not more aghast the matrons of renown,
 When tyrant Nero burn'd th' imperial town,
 Shriek'd for the downfal in a doleful cry,
 For which their guiltless lords were doom'd to die.

Now to my story I return again:
 The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
 This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
 Of those distracted damsels in the yard;
 And starting up beheld the heavy fight,
 How Reynard to the forest took his flight,
 And cross his back, as in triumphant scorn,
 The hope and pillar of the house was borne.

The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry;
 Out from his house ran every neighbour nigh:
 The vicar first, and after him the crew
 With forks and staves, the felon to pursue.
 Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
 And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
 In panic horror of pursuing dogs;
 With many a deadly grunt and doleful squeak,
 Poor swine, as if their pretty hearts would break.

The shouts of men, the women in dismay,
 With shrieks augment the terror of the day.
 The ducks that heard the proclamation cry'd,
 And fear'd a persecution might betide,
 Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
 Obscure in rushes of the liquid lake.

The geese fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms
 Drive headlong from their waxen cells in swarms.
 Jack Straw at London-stone, with all his rout,
 Struck not the city with so loud a shout;

Not when with English hate they did pursue
 A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew:

Not when the welkin rung with one and all;

And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall:

Earth seem'd to sink beneath, and heaven above to
 fall.

With might and main they chac'd the murderous fox,
 With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
 To kindle Mars with military sounds,
 Nor wanted horns t' inspire sagacious hounds.

But see how Fortune can confound the wise,
 And, when they least expect it, turn the dice.
 The captive-cock, who scarce could draw his breath,
 And lay within the very jaws of death;
 Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,
 And fear supply'd him with this happy thought:
 Your's is the prize, victorious prince, said he,
 The vicar my defeat, and all the village fee.
 Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
 And bid the churls that envy you the prey

Call back their mungril curs, and cease their cry,
 See, fools, the shelter of the wood is nigh,
 And Chanticleer in your despight shall die,
 He shall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone. }

'Tis well advis'd, in faith it shall be done;
 This Reynard said: but, as the word he spoke,
 The prisoner with a spring from prison broke:
 Then stretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might,
 And to the neighbouring maple wing'd his flight;

Whom when the traitor safe on tree beheld,
 He curs'd the Gods, with shame and sorrow fill'd;
 Shame for his folly, sorrow out of time,
 For plotting an unprofitable crime;
 Yet, mastering both, th' artificer of lyes
 Renews th' assault, and his last battery tries.

Though I, said he, did ne'er in thought offend,
 How justly may my lord suspect his friend!
 Th' appearance is against me, I confess,
 Who seemingly have put you in distress:
 You, if your goodness does not plead my cause,
 May think I broke all hospitable laws,
 To bear you from your palace-yard by might,
 And put your noble person in a fright:
 This, since you take it ill, I must repent,
 Though, heaven can witness, with no bad intent:
 I practis'd it, to make you taste your cheer
 With double pleasure, first prepar'd by fear.
 So loyal subjects often seize their prince,
 Forc'd (for his good) to seeming violence,
 Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence. }

Descend; so help me Jove as you shall find
That Reynard comes of no dissembling kind.

Nay, quoth the cock; but I beshrew us both,
If I believe a faint upon his oath:

An honest man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only may be cozen'd twice:

Once warn'd is well bewar'd; not flattering lies
Shall soothe me more to sing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies. }

Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he should see, has he deserv'd to swim?

Better, fir cock, let all contention cease,
Come down, said Reynard, let us treat of peace.

A peace with all my soul, said Chanticleer;
But, with your favour, I will treat it here:

And, lest the truce with treason should be mixt,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

THE MORAL.

In this plain fable you th' effect may see
Of negligence, and fond credulity:

And learn besides of flatterers to beware,
Then most pernicious when they speak too fair.

The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, though the tale a lye.

Who spoke in parables, I dare not say;
But sure he knew it was a pleasing way,
Sound sense, by plain example, to convey. }

And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleasure with instruction should be join'd;
So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind. }

THE

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF:

O R,

THE LADY IN THE ARBOUR.

A VISION.

NOW turning from the wintery signs, the sun
 His course exalted through the Ram had run,
 And, whirling up the skies, his chariot drove
 Through Taurus and the lightsome realms of love;
 Where Venus from her orb descends in showers,
 To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers:
 When first the tender blades of grass appear,
 And buds, that yet the blast of Eurus fear,
 Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year: }
 Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains,
 Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
 Then, at their call embolden'd, out they come,
 And swell the germs, and burst the narrow room;
 Broader and broader yet, their blooms display.
 Salute the welcome sun, and entertain the day.
 Then from their breathing souls the sweets repair,
 To scent the skies, and purge th' unwholesome air:
 Joy spreads the heart, and, with a general song,
 Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.

In that sweet season, as in bed I lay,
 And sought in sleep to pass the night away,
 I turn'd my weary'd side, but still in vain,
 Though full of youthful health, and void of pain:

Cares I had none, to keep me from my rest,
For love had never enter'd in my breast;
I wanted nothing fortune could supply,
Nor did she slumber till that hour deny.
I wonder'd then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dry'd away the balmy dew:
Seas would be pools, without the brushing air,
To curl the waves: and sure some little care
Should weary nature so, to make her want repair. }

When Chanticleer the second watch had sung,
Scorning the scorner sleep, from bed I sprung;
And, dressing, by the moon, in loose array,
Pass'd out in open air, preventing day, }
And fought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order stood
Of oaks unshorn a venerable wood;
Fresh was the grass beneath, and every tree
At distance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal space
Stretch'd to their neighbours with a long embrace
And the new leaves on every bough were seen,
Some ruddy colour'd, some of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the spring,
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.
Both eyes and ears receiv'd a like delight,
Enchanting music, and a charming sight.
On Philomel I fix'd my whole desire;
And listen'd for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing;
And wanted yet an omen to the spring.

Attending

Attending long in vain, I took the way,
 Which through a path but scarcely printed lay;
 In narrow mazes oft it seem'd to meet,
 And look'd as lightly prefs'd by fairy feet.
 Wandering I walk'd alone, for still methought
 To some strange end so strange a path was wrought:
 At last it led me where an arbour stood,
 The sacred receptacle of the wood:
 This place unmark'd, though oft I walk'd the green,
 In all my progress I had never seen:
 And, seiz'd at once with wonder and delight,
 Gaz'd all around me, new to the transporting sight.
 'Twas bench'd with turf, and goodly to be seen,
 The thick young grass arose in fresher green:
 The mound was newly made, no sight could pass
 Betwixt the nice partitions of the grass;
 The well-united sods so closely lay;
 And all around the shades defended it from day:
 For sycamores with eglantine were spread,
 A hedge about the sides, a covering over head.
 And so the fragrant brier was wove between,
 The sycamore and flowers were mix'd with green,
 That nature seem'd to vary the delight;
 And satisfy'd at once the smell and sight.
 The master workman of the bower was known
 Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon;
 Who twining leaves with such proportion drew,
 They rose by measure, and by rule they grew;
 No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell:
 For none but hands divine could work so well.

Both

Both roof and sides were like a parlour made,
A soft recess, and a cool summer shade;
The hedge was set so thick, no foreign eye
The persons plac'd within it could espy:
But all that pass'd without with ease was seen,
As if nor fence nor tree was plac'd between.
'Twas border'd with a field; and some was plain
With grass, and some was sow'd with rising grain.
That (now the dew with spangles deck'd the ground)
A sweeter spot of earth was never found.
I look'd and look'd, and still with new delight;
Such joy my soul, such pleasures fill'd my sight:
And the fresh eglantine exhal'd a breath,
Whose odours were of power to raise from death.
Nor sullen discontent, nor anxious care,
Ev'n though brought thither, could inhabit there:
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe;
For this sweet place could only pleasure know.

Thus as I mus'd, I cast aside my eye,
And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The spreading branches made a goodly show,
And full of opening blooms was every bough:
A goldfinch there I saw with gawdy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from side to side,
Still pecking as she pass'd; and still she drew
The sweets from every flower, and suck'd the dew:
Suffic'd at length, she warbled in her throat,
And tun'd her voice to many a merry note,
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,
Yet such as sooth'd my soul, and pleas'd my ear.

Her

Her short performance was no sooner try'd,
When she I sought, the nightingale, reply'd:
So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,
That the grove echoed, and the valleys rung:
And I so ravish'd with her heavenly note,
I stood intranc'd, and had no room for thought,
But, all o'er-power'd with ecstasy of bliss,
Was in a pleasing dream of paradise;
At length I wak'd, and, looking round the bower,
Search'd every tree, and pry'd on every flower,
If any-where by chance I might espy,
The rural poet of the melody:
For still methought she sung not far away:
At last I found her on a laurel spray.
Close by my side she sat, and fair in sight,
Full in a line against her opposite;
Where stood with eglantine the laurel twin'd;
And both their native sweets were well conjoin'd.

On the green bank I sat, and listen'd long
(Sitting was more convenient for the song):
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,
But wish'd to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too swiftly pass'd,
And every note I fear'd would be the last.
My sight, and smell, and hearing, were employ'd,
And all three senses in full gust enjoy'd.
And what alone did all the rest surpass,
The sweet possession of the fairy place;
Single, and conscious to myself alone
Of pleasures to th' excluded world unknown:

Pleasures

Pleasures which no where else were to be found,
And all Elysium in a spot of ground.

Thus while I sat intent to see and hear,
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,
All suddenly I heard th' approaching sound.
Of vocal music, on th' enchanted ground:
An host of saints it seem'd, so full the quire;
As if the bless'd above did all conspire
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.

At length there issued from the grove behind
A fair assembly of the female kind:

A train less fair, as ancient fathers tell,
Seduc'd the sons of heaven to rebel.

I pass their form, and every charming grace,
Less than an angel would their worth debase:

But their attire, like liveries of a kind

All rich and rare, is fresh within my mind.

In velvet white as snow the troop was gown'd,

The seams with sparkling emeralds set around:

Their hoods and sleeves the same; and purled o'er

With diamonds, pearls, and all the shining store

Of eastern pomp: their long descending train,

With rubies edg'd, and sapphires, swept the plain:

High on their heads, with jewels richly set,

Each lady wore a radiant coronet.

Beneath the circles, all the quire was grac'd

With chaplets green on their fair foreheads plac'd.

Of laurel some, of woodbine many more;

And wreaths of *Agnus castus* others bore:

These

These last, who with those virgin crowns were dress'd,
Appear'd in higher honour than the rest.

They danc'd around: but in the midst was seen
A lady of a more majestic mien;
By stature and by beauty mark'd their sovereign queen. }

She in the midst began with sober grace;
Her servant's eyes were fix'd upon her face,
And, as she mov'd or turn'd, her motions view'd,
Her measures kept, and step by step pursued.
Methought she trod the ground with greater grace,
With more of godhead shining in her face;
And as in beauty she surpass'd the quire,
So, nobler than the rest, was her attire.

A crown of ruddy gold inclos'd her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a show:
A branch of *Agnus castus* in her hand

She bore aloft (her sceptre of command);
Admir'd, ador'd by all the circling crowd,
For wheresoe'er she turn'd her face, they bow'd:
And as she danc'd, a roundelay she sung,
In honour of the laurel, ever young:

She rais'd her voice on high, and sung so clear,
The fawns came scudding from the groves to hear:
And all the bending forest lent an ear. }

At every close she made, th' attending throng
Reply'd, and bore the burden of the song:
So just, so small, yet in so sweet a note,
It seem'd the music melted in the throat.

Thus dancing on, and singing as they danc'd,
They to the middle of the mead advanc'd,

Till round my arbour a new ring they made,
 And footed it about the secret shade.
 O'erjoy'd to see the jolly troop so near,
 But somewhat aw'd, I shook with holy fear;
 Yet not so much, but that I noted well
 Who did the most in song or dance excel.

Not long I had observ'd, when from afar
 I heard a sudden symphony of war;
 The neighing courfers, and the soldiers cry,
 And sounding trumps that seem'd to tear the sky:
 I saw soon after this, behind the grove,
 From whence the ladies did in order move,
 Come issuing out in arms a warrior train,
 That like a deluge pour'd upon the plain:
 On barbed steeds they rode in proud array,
 Thick as the college of the bees in May,
 When swarming o'er the dusky fields they fly,
 New to the flowers, and intercept the fly.
 So fierce they drove, their courfers were so fleet,
 That the turf trembled underneath their feet.

To tell their costly furniture were long,
 The summer's day would end before the song:
 To purchase but the tenth of all their store,
 Would make the mighty Persian monarch poor.
 Yet what I can, I will; before the rest
 The trumpets issued in white mantles dress'd:
 A numerous troop, and all their heads around
 With chaplets green of cerriat-oak were crown'd.
 And at each trumpet was a banner bound;

} Which

Which waving in the wind display'd at large
 Their master's coat of arms, and knightly charge.
 Broad were the banners, and of snowy hue,
 A purer web the silk-worm never drew.
 The chief about their necks the scutcheons wore,
 With orient pearls and jewels powder'd o'er:
 Broad were their collars too, and every one
 Was set about with many a costly stone.
 Next these of kings at arms a goodly train
 In proud array came prancing o'er the plain:
 Their cloaks were cloth of silver mix'd with gold,
 And garlands green around their temples roll'd:
 Rich crowns were on their royal scutcheons plac'd,
 With sapphires, diamonds, and with rubies grac'd:
 And as the trumpets their appearance made,
 So these in habits were alike array'd;
 But with a pace more sober, and more slow;
 And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a row.
 The pursuivants came next, in number more;
 And like the heralds each his scutcheon bore:
 Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,
 With each an oaken chaplet on his head.

Nine royal knights in equal rank succeed,
 Each warrior mounted on a fiery steed:
 In golden armour glorious to behold;
 The rivets of their arms were nail'd with gold.
 Their surcoats of white ermin fur were made,
 With cloth of gold between, that cast a glittering shade;
 The trappings of their steeds were of the same;
 The golden fringe ev'n set the ground on flame,

And

And drew a precious trail: a crown divine
Of laurel did about their temples twine.

Three henchmen were for every knight assign'd,
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind:
White velvet, but unshorn, for cloaks they wore,
And each within his hand a truncheon bore:
The foremost held a helm of rare device;
A prince's ransom would not pay the price.
The second bore the buckler of his knight,
The third of cornel-wood a spear upright,
Headed with piercing steel, and polish'd bright. }
Like to their lords their equipage was seen,
And all their foreheads crown'd with garlands green.

And after these came, arm'd with spear and shield,
An host so great, as cover'd all the field,
And all their foreheads, like the knights before,
With laurels ever-green were shaded o'er,
Or oak, or other leaves of lasting kind,
Tenacious of the stem, and firm against the wind.
Some in their hands, beside the lance and shield,
The boughs of woodbine or of hawthorn held,
Or branches for their mystic emblems took,
Of palm, of laurel, or of cerial oak.
Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty sound,
Drawn in two lines adverse they wheel'd around, }
And in the middle meadow took their ground.
Among themselves the turney they divide,
In equal squadrons rang'd on either side.
Then turn'd their horses heads, and man to man,
And steed to steed oppos'd, the jousts began.

They

They lightly set their lances in the rest,
 And, at the sign, against each other press'd:
 They met. I sitting at my ease beheld
 The mix'd events, and fortunes of the field.
 Some broke their spears, some tumbled horse and man,
 And round the field the lighten'd courfers ran.
 An hour and more, like tides, in equal sway
 They rush'd, and won by turns, and lost the day:
 At length the nine (who still together held)
 Their fainting foes to shameful fight compell'd,
 And with resistless force o'er-ran the field. }
 Thus, to their fame, when finish'd was the fight,
 The victors from their lofty steeds alight:
 Like them dismounted all the warlike train,
 And two by two proceeded o'er the plain:
 Till to the fair assembly they advanc'd,
 Who near the secret arbour sung and danc'd.

The ladies left their measures at the fight,
 To meet the chiefs returning from the fight, }
 And each with open arms embrac'd her chosen knight. }
 Amid the plain a spreading laurel stood,
 The grace and ornament of all the wood:
 That pleasing shade they sought, a soft retreat
 From sudden April showers, a shelter from the heat:
 Her leafy arms with such extent were spread,
 So near the clouds was her aspiring head,
 That hosts of birds, that wing the liquid air,
 Perch'd in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
 And flocks of sheep beneath the shade from far
 Might hear the rattling hail, and wintery war;

From Heaven's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoy'd the cool, and shunn'd the scorching heat:
A hundred knights might there at ease abide;
And every knight a lady by his side:
The trunk itself such odours did bequeath,
That a Moluccan breeze to these was common breath.
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeisance made: }
And seem'd to venerate the sacred shade.
These rites perform'd, their pleasures they pursue,
With song of love, and mix with pleasures new;
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And every champion leads his chosen dame.

I cast my sight upon the farther field,
And a fresh object of delight beheld:
For from the region of the West I heard
New music found, and a new troop appear'd;
Of knights, and ladies mix'd, a jolly band,
But all on foot they march'd, and hand in hand.

The ladies dress'd in rich fymars were seen
Of Florence fatten, flower'd with white and green, }
And for a shade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.
The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row;
And every damsel wore upon her head
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.
Attir'd in mantles all the knights were seen,
That gratify'd the view with chearful green:
Their chaplets of their ladies colours were,
Compos'd of white and red, to shade their shining hair.
Before

Before the merry troop the minstrels play'd ;
 All in their master's liveries were array'd,
 And clad in green, and on their temples wore
 The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
 Their instruments were various in their kind,
 Some for the bow, and some for breathing wind :
 The fawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noisy band,
 And the soft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
 A tuft of daisies on a flowery lay
 They saw, and thitherward they bent their way ;
 To this both knights and dames their homage made,
 And due obeisance to the daisy paid.
 And then the band of flutes began to play,
 To which a lady sung a virelay :
 And still at every close she would repeat
 The burden of the song, " The daisy is so sweet."
 The daisy is so sweet, when she begun,
 The troop of knights and dames continued on.
 The concert and the voice so charm'd my ear,
 And sooth'd my soul, that it was heaven to hear.

But soon their pleasure pass'd : at noon of day,
 The sun with sultry beams began to play :
 Not Sirius shoots a fiercer flame from high,
 When with his poisonous breath he blasts the sky :
 Then droop'd the fading flowers (their beauty fled)
 And clos'd their sickly eyes, and hung the head ;
 And, rivell'd up with heat, lay dying in their bed. }
 The ladies gasp'd, and scarcely could respire ;
 The breath they drew, no longer air, but fire ;

The fainty knights were scorch'd; and knew not where
To run for shelter, for no shade was near;
And after this the gathering clouds amain
Pour'd down a storm of rattling hail and rain:
And lightning flash'd betwixt: the field, and flowers,
Burnt up before, were buried in the showers.
The ladies and the knights, no shelter nigh,
Bare to the weather and the wintery sky,
Were dropping wet, disconsolate, and wan,
And through their thin array receiv'd the rain;
While those in white protected by the tree
Saw pass in vain th' assault, and stood from danger free,
But as compassion mov'd their gentle minds,
When ceas'd the storm, and silent were the winds,
Displeas'd at what, not suffering, they had seen,
They went to cheer the faction of the green:
The queen in white array, before her band,
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,
And with behaviour sweet their foes embrace,
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,
Fair sister, I have suffer'd in your woe;
Nor shall be wanting aught within my power
For your relief in my refreshing bower.
That other answer'd with a lowly look,
And soon the gracious invitation took:
For ill at ease both she and all her train
The scorching sun had borne, and beating rain.
Like courtesy was us'd by all in white,
Each dame a dame receiv'd, and every knight a knight.

The

The laurel champions with their swords invade
 The neighbouring forests, where the juffs were made,
 And ferewood from the rotten hedges took,
 And seeds of latent fire from flints provoke:
 A chearful blaze arofe, and by the fire
 They warm'd their frozen feet, and dry'd their wet
 attire.

Refresh'd with heat, the ladies fought around
 For virtuous herbs, which gather'd from the ground
 They squeez'd the juice, and cooling ointment made,
 Which on their fun-burnt cheeks and their chapt skins
 they laid:

Then fought green falads, which they bade them eat,
 A foveraign remedy for inward heat.

The lady of the leaf ordain'd a feaft,
 And made the lady of the flower her gueft:
 When lo, a bower afcended on the plain,
 With fudden feats ordain'd, and large for either train.
 This bower was near my pleafant harbour plac'd,
 That I could hear and fee whatever pafs'd:
 The ladies fat with each a knight between,
 Diftinguifh'd by their colours, white and green;
 The vanquifh'd party with the victors join'd,
 Nor wanted fweet difcourfe, the banquet of the mind.
 Mean time the minftrels play'd on either fide,
 Vain of their art, and for the maffery vy'd:
 The fweet contention lafted for an hour,
 And reach'd my fecret harbour from the bower.

The fun was fet; and Vefper, to fupply
 His abfent beams, had lighted up the fky:

When Philomel officious all the day
To sing the service of th' ensuing May,
Fled from her laurel shade, and wing'd her flight
Directly to the queen array'd in white:
And hopping sat familiar on her hand,
A new musician, and increas'd the band.

The goldfinch, who, to shun the scalding heat,
Had chang'd the medlar for a safer seat,
And hid in bushes 'scap'd the bitter shower,
Now perch'd upon the lady of the flower;
And either songster holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renew'd their notes:
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehears'd, to sing by night:
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danc'd by star-light and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen
Supply'd with steeds the lady of the green,
Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day.

This when I saw, inquisitive to know
The secret moral of the mystic show,
I started from my shade, in hopes to find
Some nymph to satisfy my longing mind:
And as my fair adventure fell, I found
A lady all in white, with laurel crown'd,
Who clos'd the rear, and softly pac'd along,
Repeating to herself the former song.
With due respect my body I inclin'd,
As to some being of superior kind,

And

And made my court according to the day,
 Wishing her queen and her a happy May.
 Great thanks, my daughter, with a gracious bow,
 She said; and I, who much desir'd to know
 Of whence she was, yet fearful how to break
 My mind, adventur'd humbly thus to speak:
 Madam, might I presume and not offend,
 So may the stars and shining moon attend
 Your nightly sports, as you vouchsafe to tell
 What nymphs they were who mortal forms excel,
 And what the knights who fought in lifted fields so
 well.

To this the dame reply'd: Fair daughter, know,
 That what you saw was all a fairy show:
 And all those airy shapes you now behold,
 Were human bodies once, and cloth'd with earthly mold,
 Our souls, not yet prepar'd for upper light,
 Till doomsday wander in the shades of night;
 This only holiday of all the year,
 We privileg'd in sunshine may appear:
 With songs and dance we celebrate the day,
 And with due honours usher in the May.
 At other times we reign by night alone,
 And posting through the skies pursue the moon:
 But when the morn arises, none are found;
 For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
 And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
 He drives the wretch before, and lashes into night.

All courteous are by kind; and ever proud
 With friendly offices to help the good.

In every land we have a larger space
 Than what is known to you of mortal race:
 Where we with green adorn our fairy bowers,
 And ev'n this grove, unseen before, is ours.
 Know farther; every lady cloth'd in white,
 And, crown'd with oak and laurel every knight,
 Are servants to the leaf, by liveries known
 Of innocence; and I myself am one.
 Saw you not her so graceful to behold
 In white attire, and crown'd with radiant gold?
 The sovereign lady of our land is she,
 Diana call'd, the queen of chastity:
 And, for the spotless name of maid she bears,
 That Agnus castus in her hand appears;
 And all her train, with leafy chaplets crown'd,
 Were for unblam'd virginity renown'd;
 But those the chief and highest in command
 Who bear those holy branches in their hand:
 The knights adorn'd with laurel crowns are they,
 Whom death nor danger never could dismay,
 Victorious names, who made the world obey:
 Who, while they liv'd, in deeds of arms excell'd,
 And after death for deities were held.
 But those, who wear the woodbine on their brow,
 Were knights of love, who never broke their vow;
 Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free
 From fears, and fickle chance, and jealousy.
 The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear,
 As true as Tristram and Isotta were,

But

But what are those, said I, th' unconquer'd nine,
Who crown'd with laurel-wreaths in golden armour
shine?

And who the knights in green, and what the train
Of ladies drefs'd with daisies on the plain?
Why both the bands in worship disagree,
And some adore the flower, and some the tree?

Just is your suit, fair daughter, said the dame:
Those laurel'd chiefs were men of mighty fame;
Nine worthies were they call'd of different rites,
Three jews, three pagans, and three christian knights.
These, as you see, ride foremost in the field,
As they the foremost rank of honour held,
And all in deeds of chivalry excell'd: }

Their temples wreath'd with leaves, that still renew;
For deathless laurel is the victor's due:

Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,
Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemain:
For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,
Emblems of valour and of victory.

Behold an order yet of newer date,
Doubling their number, equal in their state;
Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,
In battle brave, protectors of their prince:
Unchang'd by fortune, to their sovereign true,
For which their manly legs are bound with blue.
These, of the garter call'd, of faith unstain'd,
In fighting fields the laurel have obtain'd,
And well repaid the honours which they gain'd. }
The laurel wreaths were first by Cæsar worn,
And still they Cæsar's successors adorn:

One leaf of this is immortality,
And more of worth than all the world can buy.

One doubt remains, said I, the dames in green,
What were their qualities, and who their queen?
Flora commands, said she, those nymphs and knights,
Who liv'd in slothful ease and loose delights;
Who never acts of honour durst pursue,
The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue:
Who, nurs'd in idleness, and train'd in courts,
Pass'd all their precious hours in plays and sports,
Till death behind came stalking on, unseen,
And wither'd (like the storm) the freshness of their green.
These, and their mates, enjoy their present hour,
And therefore pay their homage to the flower.
But knights in knightly deeds should persevere,
And still continue what at first they were;
Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career. }
No room for cowardice, or dull delay;
From good to better they should urge their way.
For this with golden spurs the chiefs are grac'd,
With pointed rowels arm'd to mend their haste;
For this with lasting leaves their brows are bound;
For laurel is the sign of labour crown'd, }
Which bears the bitter blast, nor shaken falls to ground:
From winter winds it suffers no decay,
For ever fresh and fair, and every month is May.
Ev'n when the vital sap retreats below,
Ev'n when the hoary head is hid in snow;
The life is in the leaf, and still between
The fits of falling snow appears the streaky green.

Not so the flower, which lasts for little space,
 A short-liv'd good, and an uncertain grace;
 This way and that the feeble stem is driven,
 Weak to sustain the storms and injuries of heaven.
 Propp'd by the spring, it lifts aloft the head,
 But of a sickly beauty, soon to shed;
 In summer living, and in winter dead. }
 For things of tender kind, for pleasure made,
 Shoot up with swift increase, and sudden are decay'd.

With humble words, the wisest I could frame,
 And proffer'd service, I repaid the dame;
 That, of her grace, she gave her maid to know
 The secret meaning of this moral show.
 And she, to prove what profit I had made
 Of mystic truth, in fables first convey'd,
 Demanded till the next returning May,
 Whether the leaf or flower I would obey?
 I chose the leaf; she smil'd with sober cheer,
 And wish'd me fair adventure for the year,
 And gave me charms and figils, for defence
 Against ill tongues that scandal innocence:
 But I, said she, my fellows must pursue,
 Already past the plain, and out of view.

We parted thus; I homeward sped my way,
 Bewilder'd in the wood till dawn of day: }
 And met the merry crew who danc'd about the May.
 Then late refresh'd with sleep, I rose to write
 The visionary vigils of the night:
 Blush, as thou may'st, my little book, with shame,
 Nor hope with homely verse to purchase fame;
 For such thy Maker chose: and so design'd
 Thy simple stile to suit thy lowly kind. THE

THE WIFE OF BATH,
HER TALE.

IN days of old, when Arthur fill'd the throne,
 Whose acts and fame to foreign lands were blown;
 The king of elfs and little fairy queen
 Gambol'd on heaths, and danc'd on every green;
 And where the jolly troop had led the round,
 The grafs unbidden rose, and mark'd the ground:
 Nor darkling did they glance, the silver light
 Of Phoebe serv'd to guide their steps aright,
 And, with their tripping pleas'd, prolong the night.
 Her beams they follow'd, where at full she play'd,
 Nor longer than she shed her horns they stay'd,
 From thence with airy flight to foreign lands convey'd.
 Above the rest our Britain held they dear,
 More solemnly they kept their sabbaths here,
 And made more spacious rings, and revel'd half the
 year.

I speak of ancient times, for now the swain
 Returning late may pass the woods in vain,
 And never hope to see the nightly train:
 In vain the dairy now with mint is dress'd,
 The dairy-maid expects no fairy guest,
 To skim the bowls, and after pay the feast.
 She sighs, and shakes her empty shoes in vain,
 No silver penny to reward her pain:
 For priests, with prayers and other goodly gear,
 Have made the merry goblins disappear;

And

And where they play'd their merry pranks before,
Have sprinkled holy water on the floor:

And friars that through the wealthy regions run,
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the sun,
Resort to farmers rich, and bless their halls,
And exorcise the beds, and cross the walls:

This makes the fairy quires forsake the place,
When once 'tis hallow'd with the rites of grace:

But in the walks where wicked elves have been,

The learning of the parish now is seen,

The midnight parson posting o'er the green,

With gown tuck'd up, to wakes, for Sunday next,

With humming ale encouraging his text;

Nor wants the holy leer to country-girl betwixt.

From fiends and imps he sets the village free,

There haunts not any incubus but he.

The maids and women need no danger fear

To walk by night, and sanctity so near:

For by some haycock, or some shady thorn,

He bids his beads both even song and morn.

It so befel in this king Arthur's reign,

A lusty knight was pricking o'er the plain;

A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.

It happen'd, as he rode, a damsel gay

In russet robes to market took her way:

Soon on the girl he cast an amorous eye,

So straight she walk'd, and on her patterns high:

If seeing her behind he lik'd her pace,

Now turning short, he better likes her face.

He

He lights in haste, and, full of youthful fire,
 By force accomplish'd his obscene desire:
 This done, away he rode, not unesp'y'd,
 For swarming at his back the country cry'd:
 And once in view they never lost the sight,
 But seiz'd, and pinion'd brought to court the knight.

Then courts of kings were held in high renown,
 Ere made the common brothels of the town:
 There, virgins honourable vows receiv'd,
 But chaste as maids in monasteries liv'd:
 The king himself, to nuptial ties a slave,
 No bad example to his poets gave:

And they, not bad, but in a vicious age,
 Had not, to please the prince, debauch'd the stage.

Now what should Arthur do? He lov'd the knight,
 But sovereign monarchs are the source of right:
 Mov'd by the damsel's tears and common cry,
 He doom'd the brutal ravisher to die.
 But fair Geneura rose in his defence,
 And pray'd so hard for mercy from the prince,
 That to his queen the king th' offender gave,
 And left it in her power to kill or save:
 This gracious act the ladies all approve,
 Who thought it much a man should die for love;
 And with their mistress join'd in close debate
 (Covering their kindness with disssembled hate),
 If not to free him, to prolong his fate.
 At last agreed they call'd him by consent
 Before the queen and female parliament.

And

And the fair speaker rising from the chair,
Did thus the judgment of the house declare.

Sir knight, though I have ask'd thy life, yet still
Thy destiny depends upon my will:
Nor hast thou other surety than the grace
Not due to thee from our offended race.
But as our kind is of a softer mold,
And cannot blood without a sigh behold,
I grant thee life; reserving still the power
To take the forfeit when I see my hour:
Unless thy answer to my next demand
Shall set thee free from our avenging hand.
The question, whose solution I require,
Is, What the sex of women most desire?
In this dispute thy judges are at strife;
Beware; for on thy wit depends thy life.
Yet (lest, surpriz'd, unknowing what to say,
Thou damn thyself) we give thee farther day:
A year is thine to wander at thy will;
And learn from others, if thou want'st the skill.
But, not to hold our proffer turn'd in scorn,
Good sureties will we have for thy return;
That at the time prefix'd thou shalt obey,
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.

Woe was the knight at this severe command;
But well he knew 'twas bootless to withstand:
The terms accepted as the fair ordain,
He put in bail for his return again,
And promis'd answer at the day assign'd,
The best, with heaven's assistance, he could find.

His

His leave thus taken, on his way he went
With heavy heart, and full of discontent,
Misdoubting much, and fearful of th' event.
'Twas hard the truth of such a point to find,
As was not yet agreed among the kind.
Thus on he went; still anxious more and more,
Ask'd all he met, and knock'd at every door;
Enquir'd of men; but made his chief request
To learn from women what they lov'd the best.
They answer'd each according to her mind
To please herself, not all the female kind.
One was for wealth, another was for place:
Crones, old and ugly, wish'd a better face.
The widow's wish was oftentimes to wed;
The wanton maids were all for sport a-bed.
Some said the sex were pleas'd with handsome lies,
And some gross flattery lov'd without disguise:
Truth is, says one, he seldom fails to win
Who flatters well; for that's our darling sin;
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,
Will work ev'n with the wisest of the kind.
One thought the sex's prime felicity
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free:
Their pleasures, hours, and actions, all their own,
And uncontrol'd to give account to none.
Some wish a husband-fool; but such are curst,
For fools perverse of husbands are the worst:
All women would be counted chaste and wise,
Nor should our spouses see, but with our eyes;

For fools will prate; and though they want the wit
To find close faults, yet open blots will hit:
'Though better for their ease to hold their tongue,
For woman-kind was never in the wrong.
So noise ensues, and quarrels last for life;
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.
And some men say that great delight have we,
To be for truth extoll'd, and secrecy:
And constant in one purpose still to dwell;
And not our husbands counsels to reveal.
But that's a fable: for our sex is frail,
Inventing rather than not tell a tale.
Like leaky sieves no secrets we can hold:
Witness the famous tale that Ovid told.

Midas the king, as in his book appears,
By Phœbus was endow'd with ass's ears,
Which under his long locks he well conceal'd,
(As monarchs vices must not be reveal'd)
For fear the people have them in the wind,
Who long ago were neither dumb nor blind:
Nor apt to think from heaven their title springs,
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.
This Midas knew: and durst communicate
To none but to his wife his ears of state:
One must be trusted, and he thought her fit,
As passing prudent, and a parlous wit.
To this sagacious confessor he went,
And told her what a gift the Gods had sent:
But told it under matrimonial seal,
With strict injunction never to reveal.

The secret heard, she plighted him her troth,
 (And sacred sure is every woman's oath)
 The royal malady should rest unknown,
 Both for her husband's honour and her own;
 But ne'ertheless she pin'd with discontent;
 The counsel rumbled till it found a vent.
 The thing she knew she was oblig'd to hide;
 By interest and by oath the wife was ty'd;
 But if she told it not, the woman dy'd.
 Loth to betray a husband and a prince,
 But she must burst, or blab; and no pretence
 Of honour ty'd her tongue from self-defence.
 A marshy ground commodiously was near,
 Thither she ran, and held her breath for fear,
 Left if a word she spoke of any thing,
 That word might be the secret of the king.
 Thus full of counsel to the fen she went,
 Grip'd all the way, and longing for a vent;
 Arriv'd, by pure necessity compel'd,
 On her majestic marrow-bones she kneel'd:
 Then to the water's brink she laid her head,
 And, as a bittour bumps within a reed,
 To thee alone, O lake, she said, I tell,
 (And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal):
 Beneath his locks the king my husband wears
 A goodly royal pair of ass's ears.
 Now I have eas'd my bosom of the pain,
 Till the next longing fit return again.

Thus through a woman was the secret known;
 Tell us, and in effect you tell the town,

But

But to my tale: The knight with heavy cheer,
Wandering in vain, had now consum'd the year:
One day was only left to solve the doubt,
Yet knew no more than when he first set out.
But home he must, and, as th'award had been,
Yield up his body captive to the queen.
In this despairing state he hapt to ride,
As fortune led him, by a forest side:
Lonely the vale, and full of horror stood,
Brown with the shade of a religious wood:
When full before him at the noon of night,
(The moon was up, and shot a gleamy light)
He saw a quire of ladies in a round,
That featly footing seem'd to skim the ground:
Thus dancing hand in hand, so light they were,
He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.
At speed he drove, and came a sudden guest,
In hope where many women were, at least,
Some one by chance might answer his request.
But faster than his horse the ladies flew,
And in a trice were vanish'd out of view.

One only hag remain'd: but fouler far
Than grandame apes in Indian forests are;
Against a wither'd oak she lean'd her weight,
Propp'd on her trusty staff, not half upright,
And dropp'd an aukward court'fy to the knight.
Then said, what makes you, Sir, so late abroad
Without a guide, and this no beaten road?
Or want you aught that here you hope to find,
Or travel for some trouble in your mind?

The last I guess; and if I read aright,
 Those of our sex are bound to serve a knight;
 Perhaps good counsel may your grief assuage,
 Then tell your pain; for wisdom is in age.

To this the knight: Good mother, would you know
 The secret cause and spring of all my woe?
 My life must with to-morrow's light expire,
 Unless I tell what women most desire.
 Now could you help me at this hard essay,
 Or for your inborn goodness, or for pay;
 Yours is my life, redeem'd by your advice,
 Ask what you please, and I will pay the price:
 The proudest kerchief of the court shall rest
 Well satisfy'd of what they love the best.
 Plight me thy faith, quoth she, that what I ask,
 Thy danger over, and perform'd thy task,
 That thou shalt give for hire of thy demand;
 Here take thy oath, and seal it on my hand;
 I warrant thee, on peril of my life,
 Thy words shall please both widow, maid, and wife.

More words there needed not to move the knight,
 To take her offer, and his truth to plight.
 With that she spread a mantle on the ground,
 And, first inquiring whither he was bound,
 Bade him not fear, though long and rough the way,
 At court he should arrive ere break of day;
 His horse should find the way without a guide.
 She said: with fury they began to ride,
 He on the midst, the beldam at his side.

}
 The

The horse, what devil drove I cannot tell,
But only this, they sped their journey well:
And all the way the crone inform'd the knight,
How he should answer the demand aright.

To court they came; the news was quickly spread
Of his returning to redeem his head.

The female senate was assembled soon
With all the mob of women of the town:
The queen sat lord chief justice of the hall,
And bade the crier cite the criminal.
The knight appear'd; and silence they proclaim:
Then first the culprit answer'd to his name:
And, after forms of law, was last requir'd
To name the thing that women most desir'd.

Th' offender, taught his lesson by the way,
And by his counsel order'd what to say,
Thus bold began: My lady liege, said he,
What all your sex desire is sovereignty.
The wife affects her husband to command;
All must be her's, both money, house, and land.
The maids are mistresses ev'n in their name;
And of their servants full dominion claim.
This, at the peril of my head, I say,
A blunt plain truth, the sex aspires to sway,
You to rule all, while we, like slaves, obey.
There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,
But said the knight had well deserv'd his life.
Ev'n fair Geneura, with a blush, confess'd
The man had found what women love the best.

Up starts the beldam, who was there unseen:
And, reverence made, accosted thus the queen.
My liege, said she, before the court arise,
May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes;
To grant my just request: 'twas I who taught
The knight this answer, and inspir'd his thought.
None but a woman could a man direct
To tell us women, what we most affect.
But first I swore him on his knightly troth,
(And here demand performance of his oath)
To grant the boon that next I should desire;
He gave his faith, and I expect my hire:
My promise is fulfill'd: I sav'd his life,
And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.
The knight was ask'd, nor could his oath deny,
But hop'd they would not force him to comply.
The women, who would rather wrest the laws,
Than let a sister-plaintiff lose the cause,
(As judges on the bench more gracious are,
And more attent, to brothers of the bar)
Cry'd one and all, the suppliant should have right,
And to the grandame hag adjudg'd the knight.

In vain he sigh'd, and oft with tears desir'd,
Some reasonable suit might be requir'd.
But still the crone was constant to her note:
The more he spoke, the more she stretch'd her throat.
In vain he proffer'd all his goods, to save
His body destin'd to that living grave.
The liquorish hag rejects the pelf with scorn;
And nothing but the man would serve her turn.

Not

Not all the wealth of Eastern kings, said she,
 Have power to part my plighted love and me:
 And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,
 Yet never will I break the faith I swore;
 For mine thou art by promise, during life,
 And I thy loving and obedient wife.

My love! nay rather my damnation thou,
 Said he: nor am I bound to keep my vow;
 The fiend thy fire hath sent thee from below,
 Else how could'st thou my secret sorrows know?
 Avant, old witch, for I renounce thy bed:
 The queen may take the forfeit of my head,
 Ere any of my race so foul a crone shall wed. }
 Both heard, the judge pronounc'd against the knight;
 So was he marry'd in his own despite:
 And all day after hid him as an owl,
 Not able to sustain a fight so foul.
 Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,
 To pass the marriage feast and nuptial song:
 Mirth there was none, the man was *à-la-mort*,
 And little courage had to make his court.
 To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride:
 Was never such an ill-pair'd couple ty'd:
 Restless he toss'd, and tumbled to and fro,
 And roll'd and wriggled further off for woe.
 The good old wife lay smiling by his side,
 And caught him in her quivering arms, and cry'd,
 When you my ravish'd predecessor saw,
 You were not then become this man of straw; }
 Had you been such, you might have scap'd the law.

Is this the custom of king Arthur's court?
Are all round-table knights of such a sort?
Remember I am she who sav'd your life,
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife:
Not thus you swore in your unhappy hour,
Nor I for this return employ'd my power.
In time of need, I was your faithful friend;
Nor did I since, nor ever will, offend.
Believe me, my lov'd lord, 'tis much unkind;
What fury has possess'd your alter'd mind?
Thus on my wedding-night without pretence—
Come turn this way, or tell me my offence.
If not your wife, let reason's rule persuade;
Name but my fault, amends shall soon be made.
Amends! nay that's impossible, said he;
What change of age or ugliness can be?
Or, could Medea's magic mend thy face,
Thou art descended from so mean a race,
That never knight was match'd with such disgrace. }
What wonder, madam, if I move my side,
When, if I turn, I turn to such a bride?
And is this all that troubles you so fore?
And what the devil could'st thou wish me more?
Ah, Benedicite, reply'd the crone:
Then cause of just complaining have you none.
The remedy to this were soon apply'd,
Would you be like the bridegroom to the bride:
But, for you say a long descended race,
And wealth, and dignity, and power, and place,

Make

Make gentlemen, and that your high degree
Is much disparag'd to be match'd with me;
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood
Is but a glittering and fallacious good:
The nobleman is he whose noble mind
Is fill'd with inborn worth, unberrow'd from his kind.
The king of heaven was in a manger laid;
And took his earth but from an humble maid;
Then what can birth, or mortal men, bestow?
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow.
We, who for name and empty honour strive,
Our true nobility from him derive.
Your ancestors, who puff your mind with pride,
And vast estates to mighty titles ty'd,
Did not your honour, but their own, advance;
For virtue comes not by inheritance.
If you tralineate from your father's mind,
What are you else but of a bastard-kind?
Do, as your great progenitors have done,
And by their virtues prove yourself their son.
No father can infuse or wit or grace;
A mother comes across, and mars the race.
A grandfire or a grandame taints the blood;
And seldom three descents continue good.
Were virtue by descent, a noble name
Could never villanize his father's fame:
But, as the first, the last of all the line
Would like the sun even in descending shine;
Take fire, and bear it to the darkest house,
Betwixt king Arthur's court and Caucasus;

If you depart, the flame shall still remain,
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain:
Nor, till the fuel perish, can decay,
By nature form'd on things combustible to prey.
Such is not man, who, mixing better seed
With worse, begets a base degenerate breed:
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind.
No trace of all the great begetter's mind.
The father sinks within his son, we see,
And often rises in the third degree;
If better luck a better mother give,
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.
Such as our atoms were, even such are we,
Or call it chance, or strong necessity:
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.
And thus it needs must be: for seed conjoin'd
Lets into nature's work th' imperfect kind;
But fire, th' enlivener of the general frame,
Is one, its operation still the same.
Its principle is in itself: while ours
Works, as confederates war, with mingled powers;
Or man or woman, whichever fails:
And, oft, the vigour of the worse prevails.
Æther with sulphur blended alters hue,
And casts a dusky gleam of Sodom blue.
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends,
And the fair mermaid in a fish descends:
The line is gone; no longer duke or earl;
But, by himself degraded, turns a churl,

Nobility

Nobility of blood is but renown
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known,
And a long trail of light, to thee descending down. }
If in thy smoke it ends, their glories shine;
But infamy and villanage are thine.
Then what I said before is plainly show'd,
The true nobility proceeds from God:
Nor left us by inheritance, but given
By bounty of our stars, and grace of heaven.
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius rose,
Whom for his virtues the first Romans chose:
Fabricius from their walls repell'd the foe,
Whose noble hands had exercis'd the plough.
From hence, my lord and love, I thus conclude,
That though my homely ancestors were rude,
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace
To make you father of a generous race:
And noble then am I, when I begin,
In virtue cloath'd, to cast the rags of sin.
If poverty be my upbraided crime,
And you believe in Heaven, there was a time
When He, the great controller of our fate,
Deign'd to be man, and liv'd in low estate:
Which he who had the world at his dispose,
If poverty were vice, would never choose.
Philosophers have said, and poets sing,
That a glad poverty's an honest thing.
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind;
And happy he who can that treasure find.

But

But the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods on his gold, and, griping still at more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's poor.
The ragged beggar, though he want relief,
Has not to lose, and sings before the thief.
Want is a bitter and a hateful good,
Because its virtues are not understood:
Yet many things, impossible to thought,
Have been by need to full perfection brought:
The daring of the soul proceeds from thence,
Sharpness of wit, and active diligence;
Prudence at once, and fortitude, it gives,
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives;
For ev'n that indigence, that brings me low,
Makes me myself, and Him above, to know.
A good which none would challenge, few would choose,
A fair possession, which mankind refuse.
If we from wealth to poverty descend,
Want gives to know the flatterer from the friend.
If I am old and ugly, well for you,
No lewd adulterer will my love pursue;
Nor jealousy, the bane of marry'd life,
Shall haunt you for a wither'd homely wife;
For age and ugliness, as all agree,
Are the best guards of female chastity.
Yet since I see your mind is worldly bent,
I'll do my best to further your content.
And therefore of two gifts in my dispose,
Think ere you speak, I grant you leave to choose;

Would

Would you I should be still deform'd and old,
Nauseous to touch, and loathsome to behold;
On this condition to remain for life
A careful, tender, and obedient wife,
In all I can contribute to your ease,
And not in deed, or word, or thought, displease?
Or would you rather have me young and fair,
And take the chance that happens to your share?
Temptations are in beauty, and in youth,
And how can you depend upon my truth?
Now weigh the danger with the doubtful bliss,
And thank yourself if aught should fall amiss.

Sore sigh'd the knight, who this long sermon heard;
At length, considering all, his heart he chear'd;
And thus reply'd: My lady and my wife,
To your wife conduct I resign my life:
Choose you for me, for well you understand
The future good and ill, on either hand:
But if an humble husband may request,
Provide, and order all things for the best;
Your's be the care to profit, and to please:
And let your subject servant take his ease.

Then thus in peace, quoth she, concludes the strife,
Since I am turn'd the husband, you the wife:
The matrimonial victory is mine,
Which, having fairly gain'd, I will resign;
Forgive if I have said or done amiss,
And seal the bargain with a friendly kiss:
I promis'd you but one content to share,
But now I will become both good and fair,

No nuptial quarrel shall disturb your ease;
The business of my life shall be to please:
And for my beauty, that, as time shall try;
But draw the curtain first, and cast your eye.
He look'd, and saw a creature heavenly fair,
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.
With joy he turn'd, and seiz'd her ivory arm;
And like Pygmalion found the statue warm.
Small arguments there needed to prevail,
A storm of kisses pour'd as thick as hail.
Thus long in mutual bliss they lay embrac'd,
And their first love continued to the last:
One sunshine was their life, no cloud between;
Nor ever was a kinder couple seen.

And so may all our lives like theirs be led;
Heaven send the maids young husbands fresh in bed;
May widows wed as often as they can,
And ever for the better change their man;
And some devouring plague pursue their lives,
Who will not well be govern'd by their wives.

T H E
C H A R A C T E R
O F
A G O O D P A R S O N.

A Parish priest was of the pilgrim-train;
 An awful, reverend, and religious man.
 His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
 And charity itself was in his face.
 Rich was his soul, though his attire was poor
 (As God hath cloth'd his own ambassador);
 For such, on earth, his bless'd redeemer bore.
 Of sixty years he seem'd; and well might last
 To sixty more, but that he liv'd too fast;
 Refin'd himself to soul, to curb the sense;
 And made almost a sin of abstinence.
 Yet, had his aspect nothing of severe,
 But such a face as promis'd him sincere.
 Nothing reserv'd or sullen was to see:
 But sweet regards, and pleasing sanctity:
 Mild was his accent, and his action free.
 With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd;
 Though harsh the precept, yet the people charm'd.
 For, letting down the golden chain from high,
 He drew his audience upward to the sky:
 And oft with holy hymns he charm'd their ears
 (A music more melodious than the spheres:

For

For David left him, when he went to rest,
 His lyre; and after him he sung the best.
 He bore his great commission in his look:
 But sweetly temper'd awe; and soften'd all he spoke.
 He preach'd the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,
 And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal; }
 But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.
 He taught the gospel rather than the law;
 And forc'd himself to drive; but lov'd to draw.
 For fear but freezes minds: but love, like heat,
 Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat,
 To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,
 Wrapp'd in his crimes, against the storm prepar'd;
 But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
 He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
 Lightning and thunder (heaven's artillery)
 As harbingers before th' Almighty fly:
 Those but proclaim his stile, and disappear;
 The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there.

The tithes, his parish freely paid, he took;
 But never sued, or curs'd with bell and book.
 With patience bearing wrong; but offering none:
 Since every man is free to lose his own.
 The country churls, according to their kind,
 (Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind),
 The less he sought his offerings, pinch'd the more,
 And prais'd a priest contented to be poor.

Yet of his little he had some to spare,
 To feed the famish'd, and to clothe the bare:

For mortify'd he was to that degree,
 A poorer than himself he would not see.
 True priests, he said, and preachers of the word,
 Were only stewards of their sovereign lord;
 Nothing was their's; but all the public store:
 Intrusted riches, to relieve the poor.
 Who, should they steal, for want of his relief,
 He judg'd himself accomplice with the thief.

Wide was his parish; not contracted close
 In streets, but here and there a straggling house;
 Yet still he was at hand, without request,
 To serve the sick; to succour the distress'd:
 Tempting, on foot, alone, without affright,
 The dangers of a dark tempestuous night.

All this, the good old man perform'd alone,
 Nor spar'd his pains; for curate he had none.
 Nor durst he trust another with his care;
 Nor rode himself to Paul's, the public fair,
 To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
 Where bishoprics and sinecures are sold.
 But duly watch'd his flock, by night and day;
 And from the prowling wolf redeem'd the prey:
 And hungry sent the wily fox away. }

The proud he tam'd, the penitent he chear'd:
 Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd.
 His preaching much, but more his practice wrought
 (A living sermon of the truths he taught);
 For this by rules severe his life he squar'd:
 That all might see the doctrine which they heard.

For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest
 (The gold of heaven, who bear the God impress'd):
 But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
 'The sovereign's image is no longer seen.
 If they be foul on whom the people trust,
 Well may the baser brass contract a rust.

The prelate, for his holy life he priz'd;
 'The worldly pomp of prelacy despis'd.
 His Saviour came not with a gaudy show;
 Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
 Patience in want, and poverty of mind,
 'These marks of church and churchmen he design'd,
 And living taught, and dying left behind. }
 The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn:
 In purple he was crucify'd, not born.
 They who contend for place and high degree,
 Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.

Not but he knew the signs of earthly power
 Might well become Saint Peter's successor;
 The holy father holds a double reign,
 The prince may keep his pomp, the fisher must be plain.

Such was the faint; who shone with every grace,
 Reflecting, Moses like, his Maker's face.
 God saw his image lively was express'd;
 And his own work, as in creation blest'd.

The tempter saw him too with envious eye;
 And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
 He took the time when Richard was depos'd,
 And high and low with happy Harry clos'd.

This

CHARACTER OF A GOOD PARSON. 211

This prince, though great in arms, the priest withstood:
Near though he was, yet not the next of blood.
Had Richard unconstrain'd, resign'd the throne,
A king can give no more than is his own:
The title stood entail'd, had Richard had a son.

Conquest, an odious name, was laid aside,
Where all submitted, none the battle try'd.
The senseless plea of right by providence
Was, by a flattering priest, invented since;
And lasts no longer than the present sway;
But justifies the next who comes in play.

The people's right remains; let those who dare
Dispute their power, when they the judges are.

He join'd not in their choice, because he knew
Worse might, and often did, from change ensue.
Much to himself he thought; but little spoke;
And, undepri'd, his benefice forsook.

Now, through the land, his cure of souls he stretch'd:
And like a primitive apostle preach'd.
Still chearful; ever constant to his call;
By many follow'd; lov'd by most, admir'd by all.
With what he begg'd, his brethren he reliev'd;
And gave the charities himself receiv'd.
Gave, while he taught; and edify'd the more,
Because he shew'd, by proof, 'twas easy to be poor.

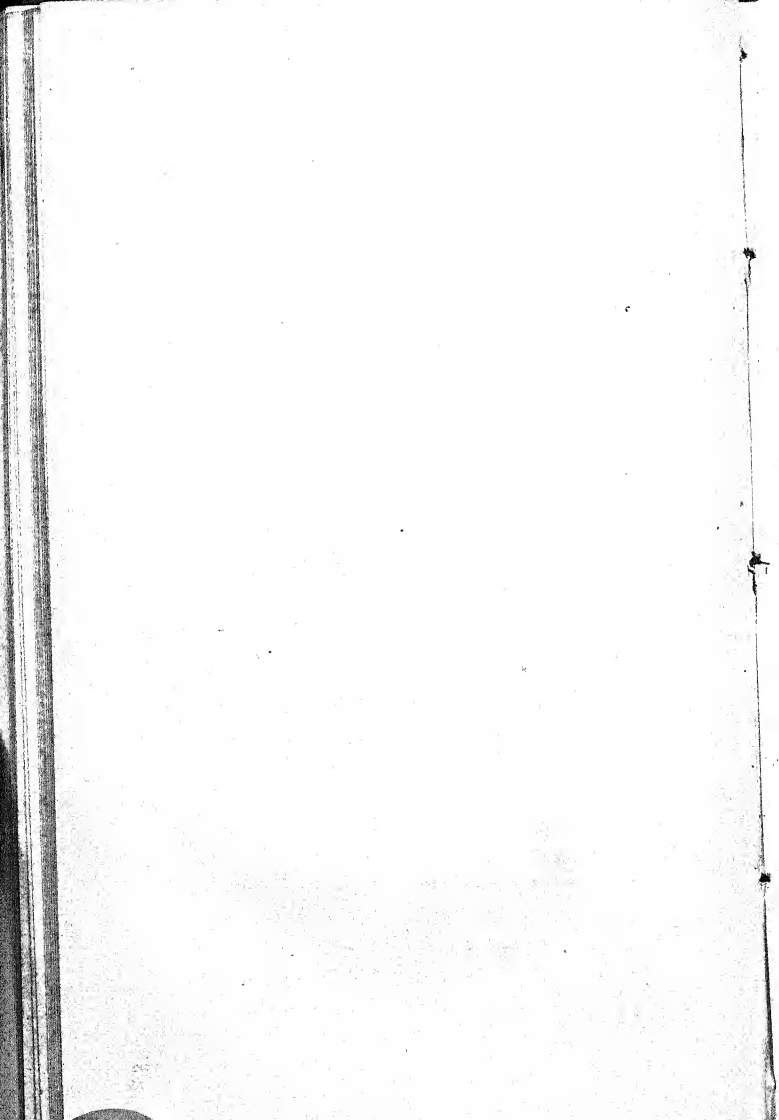
He went not with the crowd to see a shrine;
But fed us, by the way, with food divine.

In deference to his virtues, I forbear
To shew you what the rest in orders were:
This brilliant is so spotless, and so bright,
He needs no foil, but shines by his own proper light.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

BOCCACCIO.



S I G I S M O N D A

A N D

G U I S C A R D O.

WHILE Norman Tancred in Salerno reign'd,
 The title of a gracious prince he gain'd;
 Till, turn'd a tyrant in his latter days,
 He lost the lustre of his former praise;
 And from the bright meridian where he stood,
 Descending, dipp'd his hands in lovers blood.
 This prince, of Fortune's favour long possess'd,
 Yet was with one fair daughter only blest'd;
 And blest'd he might have been with her alone:
 But oh! how much more happy had he none!
 She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
 Most in his thought, and ever in his sight:
 Next, nay beyond his life, he held her dear;
 She liv'd by him, and now he liv'd in her.
 For this, when ripe for marriage, he delay'd
 Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,
 As envying any else should share a part
 Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.
 At length, as public decency requir'd,
 And all his vassals eagerly desir'd,
 With mind averse, he rather underwent
 His people's will, than gave his own consent.

So was she torn, as from a lover's side,
And made almost in his despite a bride.

Short were her marriage joys; for in the prime
Of youth, her lord expir'd before his time;
And to her father's court in little space
Restor'd anew, she held a higher place;
More lov'd, and more exalted into grace. }
This princess fresh and young, and fair and wise,
The worship'd idol of her father's eyes,
Did all her sex in every grace exceed,
And had more wit beside than women need.

Youth, health, and ease, and most an amorous mind, }
To second nuptials had her thoughts inclin'd:
And former joys had left a secret sting behind. }
But, prodigal in every other grant,
Her fire left unsupply'd her only want;
And she, betwixt her modesty and pride,
Her wishes, which she could not help, would hide.

Resolv'd at last to lose no longer time,
And yet to please herself without a crime,
She cast her eyes around the court, to find
A worthy subject suiting to her mind,
To him in holy nuptials to be ty'd,
A seeming widow, and a secret bride.
Among the train of courtiers, one she found
With all the gifts of bounteous nature crown'd,
Of gentle blood; but one whose niggard fate
Had set him far below her high estate;
Guiscard his name was call'd, of blooming age,
Now squire to Tancred, and before his page:

To

To him, the choice of all the shining crowd,
Her heart the noble Sigismonda vow'd.

Yet hitherto she kept her love conceal'd,
And with those graces every day beheld
The graceful youth; and every day increas'd
The raging fires that burn'd within her breast;
Some secret charm did all her acts attend,
And what his fortune wanted, hers could mend;
Till, as the fire will force its outward way,
Or, in the prison pent, consume the prey;
So long her earnest eyes on his were set,
At length their twisted rays together met;
And he, surpriz'd with humble joy, survey'd
One sweet regard, shot by the royal maid:
Not well assur'd, while doubtful hopes he nurs'd,
A second glance came gliding like the first;
And he, who saw the sharpness of the dart,
Without defence receiv'd it in his heart.
In public, though their passion wanted speech,
Yet mutual looks interpreted for each;
Time, ways, and means of meeting were deny'd;
But all those wants ingenious love supply'd.
Th' inventive God, who never fails his part,
Inspires the wit, when once he warms the heart.

When Guiscard next was in the circle seen,
Where Sigismonda held the place of queen,
A hollow cane within her hand she brought,
But in the concave had enclos'd a note;
With this she seem'd to play, and, as in sport,
Toss'd to her love, in presence of the court;

Take

Take it, she said; and when your needs require,
This little brand will serve to light your fire.
He took it with a bow, and soon divin'd
The seeming toy was not for nought design'd:
But when retir'd, so long with curious eyes
He view'd his present, that he found the prize.
Much was in little writ; and all convey'd
With cautious care, for fear to be betray'd
By some false confident, or favourite maid.
The time, the place, the manner how to meet,
Were all in punctual order plainly writ:
But, since a trust must be, she thought it best
To put it out of laymen's power at least;
And for their solemn vows prepar'd a priest.

Guiscard (her secret purpose understood)
With joy prepar'd to meet the coming good;
Nor pains nor danger was resolv'd to spare,
But use the means appointed by the fair.

Next the proud palace of Salerno stood
A mount of rough ascent, and thick with wood.
Through this a cave was dug with vast expence:
The work it seem'd of some suspicious prince,
Who, when abusing power with lawless might,
From public justice would secure his flight.
The passage made by many a winding way,
Reach'd ev'n the room in which the tyrant lay.
Fit for his purpose, on a lower floor,
He lodg'd, whose issue was an iron door;
From whence, by stairs descending to the ground,
In the blind grot a safe retreat he found.

Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown
 With brambles, choak'd by time, and now unknown.
 A rift there was, which from the mountain's height
 Convey'd a glimmering and malignant light,
 A breathing-place to draw the damps away,
 A twilight of an intercepted day.

The tyrant's den, whose use, though lost to fame,
 Was now th' apartment of the royal dame;
 The cavern only to her father known,
 By him was to his darling daughter shown.

Neglected long she let the secret rest,
 Till love recall'd it to her labouring breast,
 And hinted as the way by heaven design'd
 The teacher, by the means he taught, to blind.
 What will not women do, when need inspires
 Their wit, or love their inclination fires!
 Though jealousy of state th' invention found,
 Yet love refin'd upon the former ground.
 That way, the tyrant had reserv'd, to fly
 Pursuing hate, now serv'd to bring two lovers nigh.
 The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,
 Bold by desire, explor'd the secret way;
 Now try'd the stairs, and, wading through the night,
 Search'd all the deep recess, and issued into light.
 All this her letter had so well explain'd,
 Th' instructed youth might compass what remain'd;
 The cavern's mouth alone was hard to find,
 Because the path, diffus'd, was out of mind:
 But in what quarter of the copse it lay,
 His eye by certain level could survey:

Yet

Yet (for the wood perplex'd with thorns he knew)
 A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew;
 And, thus provided, search'd the brake around,
 Till the choak'd entry of the cave he found.

Thus, all prepar'd, the promis'd hour arriv'd
 So long expected, and so well contriv'd:
 With love to friend, th' impatient lover went,
 Fenc'd from the thorns, and trod the deep descent.
 The conscious priest, who was suborn'd before,
 Stood ready posted at the postern door;
 The maids in distant rooms were sent to rest,
 And nothing wanted but th' invited guest.
 He came, and knocking thrice without delay,
 The longing lady heard, and turn'd the key;
 At once invaded him with all her charms,
 And the first step he made was in her arms:
 The leathern outside, boisterous as it was,
 Gave way, and bent beneath her strict embrace:
 On either side the kisses flew so thick,
 That neither he nor she had breath to speak.
 The holy man, amaz'd at what he saw,
 Made haste to sanctify the bliss by law;
 And mutter'd fast the matrimony o'er,
 For fear committed sin should get before.
 His work perform'd, he left the pair alone,
 Because he knew he could not go too soon;
 His presence odious, when his task was done.
 What thoughts he had beseems me not to say;
 Though some surmise he went to fast and pray,
 And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.

The

The foe once gone, they took their full delight:
’Twas restless rage, and tempest all the night;
For greedy love each moment would employ,
And grudg’d the shortest pauses of their joy.

Thus were their loves auspiciously begun,
And thus with secret care were carried on.
The stealth itself did appetite restore,
And look’d so like a sin, it pleas’d the more.

The cave was now become a common way,
The wicket, often open’d, knew the key:
Love rioted secure, and, long enjoy’d,
Was ever eager, and was never cloy’d.

But as extremes are short, of ill and good,
And tides at highest mark regorge their flood;
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy.

Tancred, who fondly lov’d, and whose delight
Was plac’d in his fair daughter’s daily sight,
Of custom, when his state affairs were done,
Would pass his pleasing hours with her alone;
And, as a father’s privilege allow’d,
Without attendance of th’ officious crowd.

It happen’d once, that when in heat of day
He try’d to sleep, as was his usual way,
The balmy slumber fled his wakeful eyes,
And forc’d him, in his own despite, to rise:
Of sleep forsaken, to relieve his care,
He sought the conversation of the fair;
But with her train of damsels she was gone,
In shady walks the scorching heat to shun:

He

He would not violate that sweet recess,
And found besides a welcome heaviness,
That seiz'd his eyes; and slumber, which forgot
When call'd before to come, now came unsought.
From light retir'd, behind his daughter's bed,
He for approaching sleep compos'd his head;
A chair was ready, for that use design'd,
So quilted, that he lay at ease reclin'd;
The curtains closely drawn, the light to screen,
As if he had contriv'd to lie unseen:
Thus cover'd with an artificial night,
Sleep did his office soon, and seal'd his sight.

With heaven averse in this ill-omen'd hour
Was Guiscard summon'd to the secret bower,
And the fair nymph, with expectation fir'd,
From her attending damsels was retir'd:
For, true to love, she measur'd time so right,
As not to miss one moment of delight.
The garden, seated on the level floor,
She left behind, and, locking every door,
Thought all secure; but little did she know,
Blind to her fate, she had enclos'd her foe.
Attending Guiscard, in his leathern frock,
Stood ready, with his thrice-repeated knock:
Thrice with a doleful sound the jarring grate
Rung deaf and hollow, and presag'd their fate.
The door unlock'd, to known delight they haste,
And, panting in each other's arms embrac'd,
Rush to the conscious bed, a mutual freight,
And heedless press it with their wonted weight.

The

The sudden bound awak'd the sleeping fire,
And shew'd a sight no parent can desire;
His opening eyes at once with odious view
The love discover'd, and the lover knew:
He would have cry'd; but hoping that he dreamt,
Amazement ty'd his tongue, and stopp'd th' attempt.
Th' ensuing moment all the truth declar'd, }
But now he stood collected, and prepar'd, }
For malice and revenge had put him on his guard. }
So like a lion, that unheeded lay, }
Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray, }
With inward rage he meditates his prey.
The thoughtless pair, indulging their desires;
Alternate, kindled, and then quench'd their fires;
Nor thinking in the shades of death they play'd, }
Full of themselves, themselves alone survey'd, }
And, too secure, were by themselves betray'd. }
Long time dissolv'd in pleasure thus they lay,
Till nature could no more suffice their play;
Then rose the youth, and through the cave again
Return'd; the princess mingled with her train.

Resolv'd his unripe vengeance to defer,
The royal spy, when now the coast was clear,
Sought not the garden, but retir'd unseen,
To brood in secret on his gather'd spleen,
And methodize revenge: to death he griev'd;
And, but he saw the crime, had scarce believ'd.
Th' appointment for th' ensuing night he heard; }
And therefore in the cavern had prepar'd }
Two brawny yeomen of his trusty guard.

Scarce

Scarce had unwary Guiscard set his foot
 Within the foremost entrance of the grot,
 When these in secret ambush ready lay;
 And rushing, on the sudden seiz'd the prey:
 Encumber'd with his frock, without defence,
 An easy prize, they led the prisoner thence,
 And, as commanded, brought before the prince,
 The gloomy fire, too sensible of wrong,
 To vent his rage in words, restrain'd his tongue,
 And only said, Thus servants are preferr'd,
 And, trusted, thus their sovereigns they reward.
 Had I not seen, had not these eyes receiv'd
 Too clear a proof, I could not have believ'd.

He paus'd, and choak'd the rest. The youth, who
 saw
 His forfeit life abandon'd to the law,
 The judge th' accuser, and th' offence to him
 Who had both power and will t' avenge the crime,
 No vain defence prepar'd; but thus reply'd:
 The faults of love by love are justify'd:
 With unresisted might the monarch reigns,
 He levels mountains, and he raises plains;
 And, not regarding difference of degree,
 Abas'd your daughter, and exalted me.

This bold return with seeming patience heard,
 The prisoner was remitted to the guard.
 The sullen tyrant slept not all the night,
 But, lonely walking by a winking light,
 Sobb'd, wept, and groan'd, and beat his wither'd breast,
 But would not violate his daughter's rest;

Who

Who long expecting lay, for bliss prepar'd,
 Listening for noise, and griev'd that none she heard;
 Oft rose, and oft in vain employ'd the key,
 And oft accus'd her lover of delay;
 And pass'd the tedious hours in anxious thoughts
 away.

The morrow came; and at his usual hour
 Old Tancred visited his daughter's bower;
 Her cheek (for such his custom was) he kiss'd,
 Then bless'd her kneeling, and her maids dismiss'd.
 The royal dignity thus far maintain'd,
 Now left in private, he no longer feign'd;
 But all at once his grief and rage appear'd,
 And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.

O Sigismonda, he began to say:
 Thrice he began, and thrice was forc'd to stay,
 Till words with often trying found their way:
 I thought, O Sigismonda, (but how blind
 Are parents' eyes, their children's faults to find!)
 Thy virtue, birth, and breeding, were above
 A mean desire, and vulgar sense of love:
 Nor less than sight and hearing could convince
 So fond a father, and so just a prince,
 Of such an unforeseen and unbeliev'd offence.
 Then what indignant sorrow must I have,
 To see thee lye subjected to my slave!
 A man so smelling of the people's lee,
 The court receiv'd him first for charity;
 And since with no degree of honour grac'd,
 But only suffer'd, where he first was plac'd.

VOL. XX.

Q

A groveling

A groveling insect still; and so design'd
By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind:
A thing, by neither man nor woman priz'd,
And scarcely known enough to be despis'd.
To what has heaven reserv'd my age? Ah! why
Should man, when nature calls, not choose to die,
Rather than stretch the span of life, to find
Such ills as fate has wisely cast behind,
For those to feel, whom fond desire to live
Makes covetous of more than life can give!
Each has his share of good; and when 'tis gone,
The guest, though hungry, cannot rise too soon.
But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
Protracting life, have liv'd a day too long.
If yesterday could be recall'd again,
Ev'n now would I conclude my happy reign;
But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,
And a dark cloud o'ertakes my setting sun.
Had'st thou not lov'd, or loving sav'd the shame,
If not the sin, by some illustrious name,
This little comfort had reliev'd my mind,
'Twas frailty, not unusual to thy kind:
But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood
Shews downward appetite to mix with mud:
Thus not the least excuse is left for thee,
Nor the least refuge for unhappy me.

For him I have resolv'd: whom by surprize
I took, and scarce can call it, in disguise;
For such was his attire, as, with intent
Of nature, suited to his mean descent:

The harder question yet remains behind,
What pains a parent and a prince can find
To punish an offence of this degenerate kind.

}

As I have lov'd, and yet I love thee more
Than ever father lov'd a child before;
So that indulgence draws me to forgive:
Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live:
But, as a public parent of the state,
My justice, and thy crime, requires thy fate.
Fain would I choose a middle course to steer;
Nature's too kind, and justice too severe:
Speak for us both, and to the balance bring
On either side the father and the king.
Heaven knows, my heart is bent to favour thee;
Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest to me.

Here stopping with a sigh, he pour'd a flood
Of tears, to make his last expression good.
She, who had heard him speak, nor saw alone
The secret conduct of her love was known,
But he was taken who her soul possess'd,
Felt all the pangs of sorrow in her breast:
And little wanted, but a woman's heart,
With cries and tears had testify'd her smart,
But inborn worth, that fortune can control,
New strung and stiffer bent her softer soul;
The heroine assum'd the woman's place,
Confirm'd her mind, and fortify'd her face:
Why should she beg, or what could she pretend,
When her stern father had condemn'd her friend?

Her life she might have had; but her despair
Of saving his, had put it past her care;
Resolv'd on fate, she would not lose her breath,
But, rather than not die, solicit death.
Fix'd on this thought, she, not as women use,
Her fault by common frailty would excuse;
But boldly justify'd her innocence,
And while the fact was own'd, deny'd th' offence:
Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,
She met his glance mid-way, and thus undaunted
spoke,

Tancred, I neither am dispos'd to make
Request for life, nor offer'd life to take;
Much less deny the deed; but least of all
Beneath pretended justice weakly fall.
My words to sacred truth shall be confin'd,
My deeds shall shew the greatness of my mind.
That I have lov'd, I own; that still I love,
I call to witness all the powers above:
Yet more I own: to Guiscard's love I give
The small remaining time I have to live;
And if beyond this life desire can be,
Not fate itself shall set my passion free.
This first avow'd; nor folly warp'd my mind,
Nor the frail texture of the female kind
Betray'd my virtue: for, too well I knew
What honour was, and honour had his due:
Before the holy priest my vows were ty'd,
So came I not a strumpet, but a bride.

This

This for my fame, and for the public voice:
Yet more, his merits justify'd my choice:
Which had they not, the first election thine,
That bond dissolv'd, the next is freely mine;
Or grant I err'd, (which yet I must deny)
Had parents power ev'n second vows to tie,
Thy little care to mend my widow'd nights,
Has forc'd me to recourse of marriage rites,
To fill an empty side, and follow known delights. }
What have I done in this, deserving blame?
State-laws may alter: nature's are the same;
Those are usurp'd on helpless woman-kind,
Made without our consent, and wanting power to bind.

Thou, Tancred, better shouldst have understood,
That as thy father gave thee flesh and blood,
So gav'st thou me: not from the quarry hew'd,
But of a softer mould, with sense endu'd;
Ev'n softer than thy own, of suppler kind,
More exquisite of taste, and more than man refin'd.
Nor need'st thou by thy daughter to be told,
Though now thy spritely blood with age be cold,
Thou hast been young: and canst remember still,
That when thou hadst the power, thou hadst the will;
And from the past experience of thy fires,
Canst tell with what a tide our strong desires
Come rushing on in youth, and what their rage re- }
quires.

And grant thy youth was exercis'd in arms,
When love no leisure found for softer charms,

My tender age in luxury was train'd,
 With idle ease and pageants entertain'd;
 My hours my own, my pleasures unrestrain'd.
 So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
 That seem'd ev'n warranted by thy consent;
 For, when the father is too fondly kind,
 Such seed he sows, such harvest shall he find.
 Blame then thyself, as reason's law requires,
 (Since nature gave, and thou foment'st, my fires);
 If still those appetites continue strong,
 Thou may'st consider I am yet but young:
 Consider too that, having been a wife,
 I must have tasted of a better life;
 And am not to be blam'd, if I renew
 By lawful means the joys which then I knew.
 Where was the crime, if pleasure I procur'd,
 Young, and a woman, and to bliss inur'd!
 That was my case, and this is my defence:
 I pleas'd myself, I shunn'd incontinence,
 And, urg'd by strong desires, indulg'd my sense.
 Left to myself, I must avow, I strove
 From public shame, to screen my secret love,
 And, well acquainted with thy native pride,
 Endeavour'd what I could not help, to hide;
 For which a woman's wit an easy way supply'd.
 How this, so well contriv'd, so closely laid,
 Was known to thee, or by what chance betray'd,
 Is not my care; to please thy pride alone,
 I could have wish'd it had been still unknown.

Nor

Nor took I Guiscard by blind fancy led,
Or hasty choice, as many women wed;
But with deliberate care, and ripen'd thought,
At leisure first design'd, before I wrought:
On him I rested, after long debate,
And, not without considering, fix'd my fate:
His flame was equal, though by mine inspir'd
(For so the difference of our birth requir'd);
Had he been born like me, like me his love
Had first begun, what mine was forc'd to move:
But thus beginning, thus we persevere;
Our passions yet continue what they were,
Nor length of trial makes our joys the less sincere. }
At this my choice, though not by thine allow'd
(Thy judgment herding with the common crowd),
Thou tak'st unjust offence; and, led by them,
Dost less the merit, than the man esteem.
Too sharply, Tancred, by thy pride betray'd,
Hast thou against the laws of kind inveigh'd:
For all th' offence is in opinion plac'd,
Which deems high birth by lowly choice debas'd.
This thought alone with fury fires thy breast
(For holy marriage justifies the rest),
That I have sunk the glories of the state,
And mix'd my blood with a plebeian mate;
In which I wonder thou should'st oversee }
Superior causes, or impute to me
The fault of fortune, or the fates' decree.
Or call it heaven's imperial power alone,
Which moves on springs of justice, though unknown.

Yet this we see, though order'd for the best,
 The bad exalted, and the good oppress'd;
 Permitted laurels grace the lawless brow,
 Th' unworthy rais'd, the worthy cast below.

But leaving that: search we the secret springs,
 And backward trace the principles of things;
 There shall we find, that when the world began,
 One common mass compos'd the mould of man;
 One paste of flesh on all degrees bestow'd,
 And kneaded up alike with moistening blood.
 The same almighty power inspir'd the frame
 With kindled life, and form'd the souls the same:
 The faculties of intellect and will
 Dispens'd with equal hand, dispos'd with equal skill,
 Like liberty indulg'd with choice of good or ill: }
 Thus born alike, from virtue first began
 The difference that distinguish'd man from man:
 He claim'd no title from descent of blood,
 But that which made him noble made him good:
 Warm'd with more particles of heavenly flame,
 He wing'd his upright flight, and soar'd to fame; }
 The rest remain'd below, a tribe without a name.

This law, though custom now diverts the course,
 As nature's institute, is yet in force;
 Uncancel'd, though diffus'd; and he, whose mind
 Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind;
 Though poor in fortune, of celestial race;
 And he commits the crime who calls him base.

Now lay the line; and measure all thy court,
 By inward virtue, not external port;

And

And find whom justly to prefer above
The man on whom my judgment plac'd my love:
So shalt thou see his parts and person shine;
And, thus compar'd, the rest a base degenerate line.
Nor took I, when I first survey'd thy court,
His valour, or his virtues, on report;
But trusted what I ought to trust alone,
Relying on thy eyes, and not my own;
Thy praise (and thine was then the public voice)
First recommended Guiscard to my choice:
Directed thus by thee, I look'd, and found
A man I thought deserving to be crown'd;
First by my father pointed to my sight,
Nor less conspicuous by his native light;
His mind, his mien, the features of his face,
Excelling all the rest of human race:
These were thy thoughts, and thou could'st judge aright,
Till interest made a jaundice in thy sight;
Or should I grant thou didst not rightly see;
Then thou wert first deceiv'd, and I deceiv'd by thee.
But if thou shalt alledge through pride of mind,
Thy blood with one of base condition join'd,
'Tis false; for 'tis not baseness to be poor;
His poverty augments thy crime the more;
Upbraids thy justice with the scant regard
Of worth; whom princes praise, they should reward.
Are these the kings entrusted by the crowd
With wealth, to be dispens'd for common good?
The people sweat not for their king's delight,
T' enrich a pimp, or raise a parasite;

Theirs

Theirs is the toil; and he who well has serv'd
His country, has his country's wealth deserv'd.
Ev'n mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,
And kings by birth to lowest rank return;
All subject to the power of giddy chance,
For fortune can depress, or can advance:
But true nobility is of the mind,
Not given by chance, and not to chance design'd.
For the remaining doubt of thy decree,
What to resolve, and how dispose of me,
Be warn'd to cast that useles care aside,
Myself alone will for myself provide.
If, in thy doting and decrepit age,
Thy soul, a stranger in thy youth to rage,
Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,
Gorge with my blood thy barbarous appetite;
For I so little am dispos'd to pray
For life, I would not cast a wish away.
Such as it is, th' offence is all my own;
And what to Guiscard is already done,
Or to be done, is doom'd by thy decree,
That, if not executed first by thee,
Shall on my person be perform'd by me.

Away, with women weep, and leave me here,
Fix'd like a man, to die without a tear;
Or save, or slay us both this present hour,
'Tis all that fate has left within thy power.

She said; nor did her father fail to find,
In all she spoke, the greatness of her mind;

Yet thought she was not obstinate to die,
 Nor deem'd the death she promis'd was so nigh:
 Secure in this belief, he left the dame,
 Resolv'd to spare her life, and save her shame;
 But that detested object to remove,
 To wreak his vengeance, and to cure her love.

Intent on this, a secret order sign'd,
 The death of Guiscard to his guards enjoin'd;
 Strangling was chosen, and the night the time,
 A mute revenge, and blind as was the crime:
 His faithful heart, a bloody sacrifice,
 Torn from his breast, to glut the tyrant's eyes,
 Clos'd the severe command (for slaves to pay):
 What kings decree, the soldier must obey:
 Wag'd against foes; and when the wars are o'er,
 Fit only to maintain despotic power:
 Dangerous to freedom, and desir'd alone
 By kings, who seek an arbitrary throne;
 Such were these guards; as ready to have slain
 The prince himself, allur'd with greater gain;
 So was the charge perform'd with better will,
 By men inur'd to blood, and exercis'd in ill.

Now, though the sudden fire had eas'd his mind,
 The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,
 A pomp prepar'd to grace the present he design'd. }
 A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,
 Of depth, and breadth, the precious pledge to hold,
 With cruel care he chose: the hollow part
 Inclos'd, the lid conceal'd the lover's heart:

Then

Then of his trusted mischiefs one he sent,
And bade him with these words the gift present:
Thy father sends thee this to cheer thy breast,
And glad thy fight with what thou lov'st the best;
As thou hast pleas'd his eyes, and joy'd his mind,
With what he lov'd the most of human-kind.

Ere this the royal dame, who well had weigh'd
The consequence of what her fire had said,
Fix'd on her fate, against th' expected hour,
Procur'd the means to have it in her power;
For this, she had distill'd with early care
The juice of simples friendly to despair,
A magazine of death; and thus prepar'd,
Secure to die, the fatal message heard:
Then smil'd severe; nor with a troubled look,
Or trembling hand, the funeral present took:
Ev'n kept her countenance, when the lid remov'd
Disclos'd the heart, unfortunately lov'd;
She needed not be told, within whose breast
It lodg'd; the message had explain'd the rest.
Or not amaz'd, or hiding her surprize,
She sternly on the bearer fix'd her eyes:
Then thus; Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,
The gold, though precious, equals not the heart:
But he did well to give his best; and I,
Who wish'd a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.

At this she curb'd a groan, that else had come,
And, pausing, view'd the present in the tomb;
Then, to the heart ador'd devoutly glew'd
Her lips, and, raising it, her speech renew'd:

Ev'n

Ev'n from my day of birth, to this, the bound
Of my unhappy being, I have found
My father's care and tenderness express'd;
But this last act of love excels the rest:
For this so dear a present, bear him back
The best return that I can live to make.

The messenger dispatch'd, again she view'd
The lov'd remains, and sighing thus pursu'd:
Source of my life, and lord of my desires,
In whom I liv'd, with whom my soul expires,
Poor heart, no more the spring of vital heat,
Curs'd be the hands that tore thee from thy seat!
The course is finish'd which thy fates decreed,
And thou from thy corporeal prison freed:
Soon hast thou reach'd the goal with mended pace,
A world of woes dispatch'd in little space;
Forc'd by thy worth, thy foe, in death become
Thy friend, has lodg'd thee in a costly tomb.
There yet remain'd thy funeral exequies,
The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes,
And those, indulgent heaven has found the way
That I, before my death, have leave to pay.
My father ev'n in cruelty is kind,
Or heaven has turn'd the malice of his mind
To better uses than his hate design'd;
And made th' insult, which in his gift appears,
The means to mourn thee with my pious tears;
Which I will pay thee down, before I go,
And save myself the pains to weep below,

If

If souls can weep; though once I meant to meet
 My fate with face unmov'd, and eyes unwet,
 Yet since I have thee here in narrow room,
 My tears shall set thee first afloat within thy tomb:
 'Then (as I know thy spirit hovers nigh)
 Under thy friendly conduct will I fly
 To regions unexplor'd, secure to share
 Thy state; nor hell shall punishment appear;
 And heaven is double heaven, if thou art there.

She said: her brimful eyes, that ready flood,
 And only wanted will to keep a flood,
 Releas'd their watery store, and pour'd amain,
 Like clouds low hung, a sober shower of rain:
 Mute solemn sorrow, free from female noise,
 Such as the majesty of grief destroys;
 For, bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed
 Seem'd by the posture to discharge her head,
 O'erfill'd before (and oft her mouth apply'd
 To the cold heart); she kiss'd at once, and cry'd.
 Her maids, who stood amaz'd, nor knew the cause
 Of her complaining, nor whose heart it was;
 Yet all due measures of her mourning kept,
 Did office at the dirge, and by infection wept;
 And oft enquir'd th' occasion of her grief
 (Unanswer'd but by sighs), and offer'd vain relief.
 At length, her stock of tears already shed,
 She wip'd her eyes, she rais'd her drooping head,
 And thus pursu'd: O ever faithful heart,
 I have perform'd the ceremonial part,

The decencies of grief; it rests behind,
That, as our bodies were, our souls be join'd;
To thy whate'er abode, my shade convey,
And, as an elder ghost, direct the way.
She said; and bade the vial to be brought,
Where she before had brew'd the deadly draught:
First pouring out the med'cinable bane,
The heart, her tears had rins'd, she bath'd again;
Then down her throat the death securely throws,
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.

This done, she mounts the genial bed, and there
(Her body first compos'd with honest care)
Attends the welcome rest; her hands yet hold
Close to her heart the monumental gold;
Nor farther word she spoke, but clos'd her sight,
And quiet fought the covert of the night.
The damsels, who the while in silence mourn'd,
Not knowing, nor suspecting death suborn'd,
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred sent;
Who, conscious of th' occasion, fear'd th' event.
Alarm'd, and with presaging heart, he came,
And drew the curtains, and expos'd the dame
To loathsome light: then with a late relief
Made vain efforts, to mitigate her grief.
She, what she could, excluding day, her eyes
Kept firmly seal'd, and sternly thus replies:
Tancred, restrain thy tears, unfought by me,
And sorrow unavailing now to thee:
Did ever man before afflict his mind,
To see th' effect of what himself design'd?

Yet,

Yet, if thou hast remaining in thy heart
Some sense of love, some unextinguish'd part
Of former kindness, largely once profess'd,
Let me by that adjure thy harden'd breast,
Not to deny thy daughter's last request:
The secret love which I so long enjoy'd,
And still conceal'd to gratify thy pride,
Thou hast disjoin'd; but, with my dying breath,
Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death;
Where'er his corpse by thy command is laid,
Thither let mine in public be convey'd;
Expos'd in open view, and side by side,
Acknowldg'd as a bridegroom and a bride.

The prince's anguish hinder'd his reply:
And she, who felt her fate approaching nigh,
Seiz'd the cold heart, and, heaving to her breast,
Here, precious pledge, she said, securely rest!
These accents were her last; the creeping death
Benumb'd her senses first, then stopp'd her breath.

Thus she for disobedience justly dy'd:
The fire was justly punish'd for his pride:
The youth, least guilty, suffer'd for th' offence,
Of duty violated to his prince;
Who, late repenting of his cruel deed,
One common sepulchre for both decreed;
Intomb'd the wretched pair in royal state,
And on their monument inscrib'd their fate.

T H E O D O R E

A N D

H O N O R I A.

O E all the cities in Romanian lands,
 The chief, and most renown'd, Ravenna stands,
 Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and arts,
 And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts,
 But Theodore the brave, above the rest,
 With gifts of fortune and of nature blest'd,
 The foremost place for wealth and honour held,
 And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.

This noble youth to madness lov'd a dame
 Of high degree, Honoria was her name;
 Fair as the fairest, but of haughty mind,
 And fiercer than became so soft a kind.
 Proud of her birth (for equal she had none);
 The rest she scorn'd; but hated him alone,
 His gifts, his constant courtship, nothing gain'd;
 For she, the more he lov'd, the more disdain'd.
 He liv'd with all the pomp he could devise,
 At tilts and tournaments obtain'd the prize;
 But found no favour in his lady's eyes:
 Relentless as a rock, the lofty maid,
 Turn'd all to poison, that he did or said:
 Nor prayers, nor tears, nor offer'd vows, could move;
 The work went backward; and the more he strove
 T' advance his suit, the farther from her love.

VOL. XX.

R

Weary'd

Weary'd at length, and wanting remedy,
 He doubted oft, and oft resolv'd to die.
 But pride stood ready to prevent the blow,
 For who would die to gratify a foe?
 His generous mind disdain'd so mean a fate;
 That pass'd, his next endeavour was to hate.
 But vainer that relief than all the rest,
 The less he hop'd, with more desire possess'd;
 Love stood the siege, and would not yield his breast. }
 Change was the next, but change deceiv'd his care;
 He fought a fairer, but found none so fair.
 He would have worn her out by slow degrees,
 As men by fasting starve th' untam'd disease: }
 But present love requir'd a present ease.
 Looking he feeds alone his famish'd eyes,
 Feeds lingering death, but looking not he dies.
 Yet still he chose the longest way to fate,
 Wasting at once his life and his estate.

His friends beheld, and pity'd him in vain,
 For what advice can ease a lover's pain!
 Absence, the best expedient they could find,
 Might save the fortune, if not cure the mind:
 This means they long propos'd, but little gain'd,
 Yet, after much pursuit, at length obtain'd.

Hard you may think it was to give consent,
 But struggling with his own desires he went,
 With large expence, and with a pompous train,
 Provided as to visit France and Spain,
 Or for some distant voyage o'er the main. }

But

But love had clipp'd his wings, and cut him short,
 Confin'd within the purlieus of the court.
 Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat;
 His travels ended at his country-seat:
 To Chaffis' pleasing plains he took his way,
 There pitch'd his tents, and there resolv'd to stay.

The spring was in the prime; the neighbouring grove
 Supply'd with birds, the choiristers of love:
 Music unbought, that minister'd delight
 To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by night:
 There he discharg'd his friends; but not th' expence
 Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence.
 He liv'd as kings retire, though more at large
 From public business, yet with equal charge;
 With house and heart still open to receive;
 As well content as love would give him leave:
 He would have liv'd more free; but many a guest,
 Who could forsake the friend, pursued the feast.

It hapt one morning, as his fancy led,
 Before his usual hour he left his bed;
 To walk within a lonely lawn, that stood
 On every side surrounded by a wood:
 Alone he walk'd, to please his pensive mind,
 And sought the deepest solitude to find;
 'Twas in a grove of spreading pines he stray'd;
 The winds within the quivering branches play'd,
 And dancing trees a mournful music made.
 The place itself was suiting to his care,
 Uncouth and savage, as the cruel fair,

He wander'd on, unknowing where he went,
Lost in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And summon'd him to due repast at noon,
But love could feel no hunger but his own.

Whilst listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immers'd within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
Was dumb; a rising earthquake rock'd the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread;
A sudden horror seiz'd his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled,
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seem'd threaten'd, though unseen to mortal eye.
Unus'd to fear, he summon'd all his soul,
And stood collected in himself, and whole;
Not long: for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distress'd, who cry'd for aid,
And fill'd with loud laments the secret shade.

A thicket close beside the grove there stood,
With briars and brambles choak'd, and dwarfish wood;
From thence the noise, which now, approaching near,
With more distinguish'd notes invades his ear;
He rais'd his head, and saw a beauteous maid,
With hair dishevel'd, issuing through the shade;
Stripp'd of her cloaths, and ev'n those parts reveal'd,
Which modest nature keeps from sight conceal'd.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn,
With passing through the brakes, and prickly thorn;

Two mastiffs gaunt and grim her flight pursu'd,
And oft their fasten'd fangs in blood embu'd:
Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender side,
Mercy, O mercy, heaven! she ran, and cry'd;
When heaven was nam'd, they loos'd their hold again,
Then sprang she forth, they follow'd her amain.

Not far behind, a knight of swarthy face,
High on a coal-black steed pursu'd the chace;
With flashing flames his ardent eyes were fill'd,
And in his hand a naked sword he held:
He chear'd the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.

As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind;
Mov'd with unworthy usage of the maid,
He, though unarm'd, resolv'd to give her aid.
A saplin pine he wrench'd from out the ground,
The readiest weapon that his fury found.
Thus furnish'd for offence, he cross'd the way
Betwixt the graceless villain and his prey.

The knight came thundering on, but, from afar,
Thus in imperious tone forbad the war:
Cease, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
Nor stop the vengeance of so just a grief;
But give me leave to seize my destin'd prey,
And let eternal justice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, disdain'd, betray'd,
And suffering death for this ungrateful maid.

He said, at once dismounting from the steed;
For now the hell-bounds with superior speed

Had reach'd the dame, and, fastening on her side,
 The ground with issuing streams of purple dy'd,
 Stood Theodore surpriz'd in deadly fright,
 With chattering teeth, and bristling hair upright;
 Yet arm'd with inborn worth, Whate'er, said he,
 Thou art, who know'st me better than I thee;
 Or prove thy rightful cause, or be defy'd;
 The spectre, fiercely staring, thus reply'd:

Know, Theodore, thy ancestry I claim,
 And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
 One common fire our fathers did beget,
 My name and story some remember yet:
 Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
 When for my sins I lov'd this haughty maid;
 Not less ador'd in life, nor serv'd by me,
 Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.
 What did I not her stubborn heart to gain?
 But all my vows were answer'd with disdain:
 She scorn'd my sorrows, and despis'd my pain.
 Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitless care;
 Then, loathing life, and plung'd in deep despair,
 To finish my unhappy life, I fell
 On this sharp sword, and now am damn'd in hell.

Short was her joy; for soon th' insulting maid
 By heaven's decree in this cold grave was laid.
 And as in unrepented sin she dy'd,
 Doom'd to the same bad place is punish'd for her pride:
 Because she deem'd I well deserv'd to die,
 And made a merit of her cruelty.

There,

There, then, we met; both try'd, and both were cast,
 And this irrevocable sentence pass'd;
 That she, whom I so long pursu'd in vain,
 Should suffer from my hands a lingering pain:
 Renew'd to life that she might daily die,
 I daily doom'd to follow, she to fly;
 No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
 I seek her life (for love is none below):
 As often as my dogs with better speed
 Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed:
 Then with this fatal sword, on which I dy'd,
 I pierce her open back, or tender side,
 And tear that harden'd heart from out her breast,
 Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry hounds a
 feast.

Nor lies she long, but, as her fates ordain,
 Springs up to life, and fresh to second pain,
 Is sav'd to-day, to-morrow to be slain. }

This, vers'd in death, th' infernal knight relates,
 And then for proof fulfill'd the common fates;
 Her heart and bowels through her back he drew,
 And fed the hounds that help'd him to pursue,
 Stern look'd the fiend, as frustrate of his will,
 Not half suffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.
 And now the soul, expiring through the wound,
 Had left the body breathless on the ground,
 When thus the grisly spectre spoke again:
 Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain:
 As many months as I sustain'd her hate,
 So many years is she condemn'd by fate

To daily death; and every several place,
 Conscious of her disdain and my disgrace,
 Must witness her just punishment; and be
 A scene of triumph and revenge to me!
 As in this grove I took my last farewell,
 As on this very spot of earth I fell,
 As Friday saw me die, so she my prey
 Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day.

Thus while he spoke, the virgin from the ground
 Upstart'd fresh, already clos'd the wound,
 And, unconcern'd for all she felt before,
 Precipitates her flight along the shore:
 The hell-hounds, as ungorg'd with flesh and blood,
 Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food:
 The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace;
 And all the vision vanish'd from the place.

Long stood the noble youth oppress'd with awe
 And stupid at the wondrous things he saw,
 Surpassing common faith, transgressing nature's law: }
 He would have been asleep, and wish'd to wake,
 But dreams, he knew, no long impression make,
 Though strong at first; if vision, to what end, }
 But such as must his future state portend?
 His love the damsel, and himself the fiend.
 But yet, reflecting that it could not be
 From heaven, which cannot impious acts decree,
 Resolv'd within himself to shun the snare,
 Which hell for his destruction did prepare;
 And, as his better genius should direct,
 From an ill cause to draw a good effect.

Inspir'd from heaven he homeward took his way;
 Nor pall'd his new design with long delay:
 But of his train a trusty servant sent
 To call his friends together at his tent.
 They came, and, usual salutations paid,
 With words premeditated thus he said:
 What you have often counsel'd, to remove
 My vain pursuit of unregarded love;
 By thrift my sinking fortune to repair,
 Though late yet is at last become my care:
 My heart shall be my own; my vast expence
 Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence;
 This only I require; invite for me
 Honoria, with her father's family,
 Her friends, and mine; the cause I shall display,
 On Friday next; for that 's th' appointed day.
 Well pleas'd were all his friends, the task was light,
 The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
 Hardly the dame was drawn to this repast;
 But yet resolv'd, because it was the last.
 The day was come, the guests invited came,
 And, with the rest, th' inexorable dame:
 A feast prepar'd with riotous expence,
 Much cost, more care, and most magnificence.
 The place ordain'd was in that haunted grove,
 Where the revenging ghost pursu'd his love:
 The tables in a proud pavilion spread,
 With flowers below, and tiffue overhead:
 The rest in rank, Honoria chief in place,
 Was artfully contriv'd to set her face
 To front the thicket, and behold the chace.

}
 The

The feast was serv'd, the time so well forecast,
 That just when the desert and fruits were plac'd,
 The fiend's alarm began; the hollow sound
 Sung in the leaves, the forest shook around,
 Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground. }

Nor long before the loud laments arise,
 Of one distress'd, and mastiffs mingled cries;
 And first the dame came rushing through the wood,
 And next the famish'd hounds that fought their food,
 And grip'd her flanks, and oft essay'd their jaws in
 blood. }

Last came the felon, on his sable steed,
 Arm'd with his naked sword, and urg'd his dogs to
 speed.

She ran, and cry'd, her flight directly bent
 (A guest unbidden) to the fatal tent,
 The scene of death, and place ordain'd for punishment. }
 Loud was the noise, aghast was every guest,
 The women shriek'd, the men forsook the feast;
 The hounds at nearer distance hoarsely bay'd;
 The hunter close pursu'd the visionary maid,
 She rent the heaven with loud laments, imploring aid. }

The gallants, to protect the lady's right,
 Their faulchions brandish'd at the grisly sprite;
 High on his stirrups he provok'd the fight. }
 Then on the crowd he cast a furious look,
 And wither'd all their strength before he spoke:
 Back on your lives; let be, said he, my prey,
 And let my vengeance take the destin'd way:
 Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,
 Against th' eternal doom of Providence:

Mine is th' ungrateful maid by heaven design'd :
 Mercy she would not give, nor mercy shall she find.
 At this the former tale again he told
 With thundering tone, and dreadful to behold :
 Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
 Nor needed to be warn'd a second time,
 But bore each other back : some knew the face,
 And all had heard the much-lamented case
 Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place. }

And now th' infernal minister advanc'd,
 Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury launch'd
 Her back, and, piercing through her inmost heart,
 Drew backward as before th' offending part.
 The reeking entrails next he tore away,
 And to his meagre mastiffs made a prey.
 The pale assistants on each other star'd,
 With gaping mouths for issuing words prepar'd ;
 The still-born sounds upon the palate hung,
 And dy'd imperfect on the faltering tongue.
 The fright was general ; but the female band
 (A helpless train) in more confusion stand :
 With horror shuddering, on a heap they run,
 Sick at the sight of hateful justice done ;
 For conscience rung th' alarm, and made the case
 their own. }

So, spread upon a lake with upward eye,
 A plump of fowl behold their foe on high ;
 They close their trembling troop ; and all attend
 On whom the sowing eagle will descend.

But

But most the proud Honoria fear'd th' event,
 And thought to her alone the vision sent.
 Her guilt presents to her distracted mind
 Heaven's justice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
 And the same fate to the same sin assign'd. }
 Already sees herself the monster's prey,
 And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
 'Twas a mute scene of sorrow, mix'd with fear;
 Still on the table lay th' unfinish'd cheer:
 The knight and hungry mastiffs stood around,
 The mangled dame lay breathless on the ground;
 When on a sudden, re-inspir'd with breath,
 Again she rose, again to suffer death;
 Nor staid the hell-hounds, nor the hunter staid,
 But follow'd, as before, the flying maid:
 Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging sword,
 And mounting light as air his sable steed he spurr'd:
 The clouds dispell'd, the sky resum'd her light,
 And nature stood recover'd of her fright.
 But fear, the last of ills, remain'd behind,
 And horror heavy sat on every mind.
 Nor Theodore encourag'd more the feast,
 But sternly look'd, as hatching in his breast
 Some deep designs; which when Honoria view'd,
 The fresh impulse her former fright renew'd;
 She thought herself the trembling dame who fled,
 And him the grisly ghost that spurr'd th' infernal steed:
 The more dismay'd, for when the guests withdrew, }
 Their courteous host, saluting all the crew,
 Regardless pass'd her o'er; nor grac'd with kind adieu; }
 That

That sting infix'd within her haughty mind
The downfal of her empire she divin'd;
And her proud heart with secret sorrow pin'd.
Home as they went, the sad discourse renew'd
Of the relentless dame to death pursu'd,
And of the sight obscene so lately view'd.
None durst arraign the righteous doom she bore,
Ev'n they who pity'd most, yet blam'd her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damn'd the living dame.

At every little noise she look'd behind,
For still the knight was present to her mind:
And anxious oft she started on the way,
And thought the horseman-ghost came thundering for
his prey.

Return'd, she took her bed with little rest,
But in short slumbers dreamt the funeral feast:
Awak'd, she turn'd her side, and slept again;
The same black vapours mounted in her brain,
And the same dreams return'd with double pain.

Now forc'd to wake, because afraid to sleep,
Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap
She sprang from bed, distracted in her mind,
And fear'd, at every step, a twitching sprite behind,
Darkling and desperate, with a staggering pace,
Of death afraid, and conscious of disgrace;
Fear, pride, remorse, at once her heart assail'd,
Pride put remorse to flight, but fear prevail'd.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her soul forethought the fiend would change his game,

And

And her pursue, or Theodore be slain,
And two ghosts join their packs to hunt her o'er the
plain.

This dreadful image so possess'd her mind,
That, desperate any succour else to find,
She ceas'd all farther hope; and now began
To make reflexion on th' unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who past expression lov'd,
Proof to disdain, and not to be remov'd:
Of all the men respected and admir'd,
Of all the dames, except herself, desir'd:
Why not of her? preferr'd above the rest
By him with knightly deeds, and open love profess'd? }
So had another been, where he his vows address'd.
This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts remain'd,
That, once disdaining, she might be disdain'd.
The fear was just, but greater fear prevail'd,
Fear of her life by hellish hounds assail'd:
He took a lowering leave; but who can tell,
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her sex's arts she knew; and why not, then,
Might deep dissembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; resolv'd to try, }
She fix'd on this her utmost remedy:
Death was behind, but hard it was to die. }
'Twas time enough at last on death to call, }
The precipice in sight: a shrub was all,
That kindly stood betwixt to break the fatal fall.

One maid she had, belov'd above the rest;
Secure of her, the secret she confess'd;

And

And now the chearful light her fears dispell'd,
She with no winding turns the truth conceal'd,
But put the woman off, and stood reveal'd:
With faults confess'd commission'd her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe;
The welcome message made, was soon receiv'd;
'Twas to be wish'd, and hop'd, but scarce believ'd;
Fate seem'd a fair occasion to present;
He knew the sex, and fear'd she might repent,
Should he delay the moment of consent.
There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a care
The modesty of maidens well might spare);
But she with such a zeal the cause embrac'd
(As women, where they will, are all in haste);
The father, mother, and the kin beside,
Were overborn by fury of the tide;
With full consent of all she chang'd her state;
Resistless in her love, as in her hate.
By her example warn'd, the rest beware;
More easy, less imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil design'd
For one fair female, lost him half the kind.

CYMON AND IPHIGENIA.

POETA LOQUITUR.

OLD as I am, for ladies love unfit,
 The power of beauty I remember yet.
 Which once inflam'd my soul, and still inspires my
 wit.

If love be folly, the severe divine
 Has felt that folly, though he censures mine;
 Pollutes the pleasures of a chaste embrace,
 Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,
 With riotous excess, a priestly race.
 Suppose him free, and that I forge th' offence,
 He shew'd the way, perverting first my sense:
 In malice witty, and with venom fraught,
 He makes me speak the things I never thought.
 Compute the gains of his ungovern'd zeal;
 Ill suits his cloth the praise of railing well.
 The world will think that what we loosely write,
 Though now arraign'd, he read with some delight;
 Because he seems to chew the cud again,
 When his broad comment makes the text too plain;
 And teaches more in one explaining page,
 Than all the double-meanings of the stage.

What needs he paraphrase on what we mean?
 We were at worst but wanton; he's obscene.
 I not my fellows nor myself excuse;
 But love's the subject of the comic Muse;

Nor

Nor can we write without it, nor would you
A tale of only dry instruction view;
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,
Awakes the sleepy vigour of the soul,
And brushing o'er adds motion to the pool.
Love, studious how to please, improves our parts
With polish'd manners, and adorns with arts.
Love first invented verse, and form'd the rhyme,
The motion measur'd, harmoniz'd the chime;
To liberal acts enlarg'd the narrow-soul'd,
Softened the fierce, and made the coward bold:
The world, when waste, he peopled with increase,
And warring nations reconcil'd in peace.
Ormond, the first, and all the fair may find,
In this one legend, to their fame design'd,
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind. }

IN that sweet isle where Venus keeps her court,
And every grace, and all the loves, resort;
Where either sex is form'd of softer earth,
And takes the bent of pleasure from their birth;
There liv'd a Cyprian lord above the rest
Wife, wealthy, with a numerous issue blest'd.

But as no gift of fortune is sincere,
Was only wanting in a worthy heir;
His eldest born, a goodly youth to view,
Excell'd the rest in shape, and outward shew,
Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion join'd,
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.

His soul bely'd the features of his face;
 Beauty was there, but beauty in disgrace.
 A clownish mien, a voice with rustic sound,
 And stupid eyes that ever lov'd the ground.
 He look'd like nature's error, as the mind
 And body were not of a piece design'd,
 But made for two, and by mistake in one were
 join'd.

The ruling rod, the father's forming care,
 Were exercis'd in vain on wit's despair;
 The more inform'd, the less he understood,
 And deeper sunk by floundering in the mud.
 Now scorn'd of all, and grown the public shame,
 The people from Galesus chang'd his name,
 And Cymon call'd, which signifies a brute;
 So well his name did with his nature suit.

His father, when he found his labour lost,
 And care employ'd that answer'd not the cost,
 Chose an ungrateful object to remove,
 And loath'd to see what nature made him love;
 So to his country farm the fool confin'd;
 Rude work well suited with a rustic mind.
 Thus to the wilds the sturdy Cymon went,
 A squire among the swains, and pleas'd with banishment.
 His corn and cattle were his only care,
 And his supreme delight, a country fair.

It happen'd on a summer's holiday,
 That to the green-wood shade he took his way;
 For Cymon shunn'd the church, and us'd not much
 to pray.

His

His quarter-staff, which he could ne'er forsake,
 Hung half before, and half behind his back.
 He trudg'd along, unknowing what he sought,
 And whistled as he went for want of thought.

By chance conducted, or by thirst constrain'd,
 The deep recesses of the grove he gain'd;
 Where, in a plain defended by the wood,
 Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,
 By which an alabaster fountain stood:
 And on the margin of the fount was laid
 (Attended by her slaves) a sleeping maid.
 Like Dian and her nymphs, when, tir'd with sport,
 To rest by cool Eurotas they resort:

The dame herself the goddesses well express'd,
 Not more distinguish'd by her purple vest,
 Than by the charming features of her face,
 And ev'n in slumber a superior grace:
 Her comely limbs compos'd with decent care,
 Her body shaded with a slight cymarr;
 Her bosom to the view was only bare:
 Where two beginning paps were scarcely spy'd,
 For yet their places were but signify'd:

The fanning wind upon her bosom blows,
 To meet the fanning wind the bosom rose;
 The fanning wind, and purling streams, continue her
 repose.

The fool of nature stood with stupid eyes,
 And gaping mouth that testify'd surprize,
 Fix'd on her face, nor could remove his sight,
 New as he was to love, and novice to delight:

Long mute he stood, and leaning on his staff,
His wonder witness'd with an idiot laugh;
Then would have spoke, but by his glimmering sense
First found his want of words, and fear'd offence:
Doubted for what he was he should be known,
By his clown accent, and his country tone.
Through the rude chaos thus the running light
Shot the first ray that pierc'd the native night:
Then day and darkness in the mass were mix'd,
Till gather'd in a globe the beams were fix'd:
Last shone the sun, who, radiant in his sphere,
Illumin'd heaven and earth, and roll'd around the year.
So reason in this brutal soul began,
Love made him first suspect he was a man;
Love made him doubt his broad barbarian sound;
By love his want of words and wit he found;
That sense of want prepar'd the future way
To knowledge, and disclos'd the promise of a day.

What not his father's care, nor tutor's art,
Could plant with pains in his unpolish'd heart,
The best instructor, love, at once inspir'd,
As barren grounds to fruitfulness are fir'd:
Love taught him shame; and shame, with love at strife,
Soon taught the sweet civilities of life;
His gross material soul at once could find
Somewhat in her excelling all her kind:
Exciting a desire till then unknown,
Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
This made the first impression on his mind,
Above, but just above, the brutal kind.

For beasts can like, but not distinguish too,
Nor their own liking by reflection know;
Nor why they like or this or t' other face,
Or judge of this or that peculiar grace;
But love in gross, and stupidly admire:
As flies, allur'd by light, approach the fire.
Thus our man-beast, advancing by degrees,
First likes the whole, then separates what he sees;
On several parts a several praise bestows,
The ruby lips, the well-proportion'd nose;
The snowy skin, and raven-glossy hair,
The dimpled cheek, and forehead rising fair,
And, ev'n in sleep itself, a smiling air. }
From thence his eyes descending view'd the rest,
Her plump round arms, white hands, and heaving breast.
Long on the last he dwelt, though every part
A pointed arrow sped to pierce his heart.

Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,
(A judge erected from a country clown)
He long'd to see her eyes, in slumber hid,
And wish'd his own could pierce within the lid:
He would have wak'd her, but restrain'd his thought;
And love new-born the first good-manners taught.
And awful fear his ardent wish withstood,
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood.
For such she seem'd by her celestial-face,
Excelling all the rest of human race.
And things divine, by common sense he knew,
Must be devoutly seen, at distant view.

So checking his desire, with trembling heart
 Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart;
 Fix'd as a pilgrim wilder'd in his way,
 Who dares not stir by night, for fear to stray,
 But stands with awful eyes to watch the dawn of day. }

At length awaking, Iphigene the fair
 (So was the beauty call'd who caus'd his care)
 Unclos'd her eyes, and double day reveal'd,
 While those of all her slaves in sleep were seal'd.

The flustering cudden, propp'd upon his staff,
 Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh,
 To welcome her awake; nor durst begin
 To speak, but wisely kept the fool within.
 Then she; What makes you, Cymon, here alone?
 (For Cymon's name was round the country known.
 Because descended of a noble race,
 And for a soul ill sort'd with his face.)

But still the sot stood silent with surprize,
 With fix'd regard on her new-open'd eyes,
 And in his breast receiv'd th' invenom'd dart,
 A tickling pain that pleas'd amid the smart.
 But, conscious of her form, with quick distrust
 She saw his sparkling eyes, and fear'd his brutal lust:
 This to prevent, she wak'd her sleepy crew,
 And, rising hasty, took a short adieu.

Then Cymon first his rustic voice essay'd,
 With proffer'd service to the parting maid
 To see her safe; his hand she long deny'd,
 But took at length, asham'd of such a guide.

So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,
No more would to his country clowns repair,
But fought his father's house, with better mind,
Refusing in the farm to be confin'd.

The father wonder'd at the son's return,
And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn;
But, doubtfully receiv'd, expecting still
To learn the secret causes of his alter'd will.
Nor was he long delay'd: the first request
He made, was like his brothers to be dress'd,
And, as his birth requir'd, above the rest.

With ease his suit was granted by his fire,
Distinguishing his heir by rich attire:
His body thus adorn'd, he next design'd
With liberal arts to cultivate his mind:
He fought a tutor of his own accord,
And study'd lessons he before abhorr'd.

Thus the man-child advanc'd, and learn'd so fast,
That in short time his equals he surpass'd:
His brutal manners from his breast exil'd,
His mien he fashion'd, and his tongue he fil'd;
In every exercise of all admir'd,
He seem'd, nor only seem'd, but was inspir'd:
Inspir'd by love, whose business is to please;
He rode, he fenc'd, he mov'd with graceful ease,
More fam'd for sense, for courtly carriage more,
Than for his brutal folly known before.

What then of alter'd Cymon shall we say,
But that the fire which choak'd in ashes lay,

A load too heavy for his soul to move,
Was upward blown below, and brush'd away by love.
Love made an active progress through his mind,
The dusky parts he clear'd, the gross refin'd,
The drowsy wak'd; and as he went impress'd
The Maker's image on the human breast.
Thus was the man amended by desire,
And though he lov'd perhaps with too much fire,
His father all his faults with reason scann'd,
And lik'd an error of the better hand;
Excus'd th' excess of passion in his mind,
By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refin'd:
So Cymon, since his fire indulg'd his will,
Impetuous lov'd, and would be Cymon still;
Galeus he disown'd, and chose to bear
The name of fool confirm'd, and bishop'd by the fair.
To Cipseus by his friends his suit he mov'd,
Cipseus the father of the fair he lov'd:
But he was pre-engag'd by former ties,
While Cymon was endeavouring to be wise:
And Iphigene, oblig'd by former vows,
Had given her faith to wed a foreign spouse:
Her fire and she to Rhodian Pasimond,
Though both repenting, were by promise bound,
Nor could retract; and thus, as fate decreed,
Though better lov'd, he spoke too late to speed.
The doom was past, the ship already sent
Did all his tardy diligence prevent:
Sigh'd to herself the fair unhappy maid,
While stormy Cymon thus in secret said:

The time is come for Iphigene to find
 The miracle she wrought upon my mind:
 Her charms have made me man, her ravish'd love
 In rank shall place me with the blest above.
 For mine by love, by force she shall be mine,
 Or death, if force should fail, shall finish my design.
 Resolv'd he said; and rigg'd with speedy care
 A vessel strong, and well equipp'd for war.
 The secret ship with chosen friends he stor'd;
 And, bent to die or conquer, went aboard.
 Ambush'd he lay behind the Cyprian shore,
 Waiting the sail that all his wishes bore;
 Nor long expected, for the following tide
 Sent out the hostile ship and beauteous bride.

To Rhodes the rival bark directly steer'd,
 When Cymon sudden at her back appear'd,
 And stopp'd her flight: then, standing on his prow,
 In haughty terms he thus defy'd the foe;
 Or strike your sails at summons, or prepare
 To prove the last extremities of war.

Thus warn'd, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
 Already were the vessels side by side,
 These obstinate to save, and those to seize the bride. }
 But Cymon soon his crooked grapples cast,
 Which with tenacious hold his foes embrac'd,
 And, arm'd with sword and shield, amid the press }
 he pass'd.

Fierce was the fight, but, hastening to his prey,
 By force the furious lover freed his way:

Himself

Himself alone dispers'd the Rhodian crew,
The weak disdain'd, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conquest for his following friends remain'd,
He reap'd the field, and they but only glean'd.

His victory confess'd, the foes retreat,
And cast the weapons at the victor's feet.
Whom thus he cheer'd: O Rhodian youth, I fought
For love alone, nor other booty sought:
Your lives are safe; your vessel I resign;
Yours be your own, restoring what is mine:
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
Robb'd by my rival, and detain'd by you:
Your Pasimond a lawless bargain drove,
The parent could not sell the daughter's love;
Or, if he could, my love disdains the laws,
And like a king by conquest gains his cause:
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,
Love taught me force, and force shall love maintain,
You, what by strength you could not keep, release,
And at an easy ransom buy your peace.

Fear on the conquer'd side soon sign'd th' accord,
And Iphigene to Cymon was restor'd:
While to his arms the blushing bride he took;
To seeming sadness she compos'd her look;
As if by force subjected to his will,
Though pleas'd, dissembling, and a woman still.
And, for she wept, he wip'd her falling tears,
And pray'd her to dismiss her empty fears;
For yours I am, he said, and have deserv'd
Your love much better whom so long I serv'd,

Than

Than he to whom your formal father ty'd
Your vows, and sold a slave, not sent a bride.
Thus while he spoke, he seiz'd the willing prey,
As Paris bore the Spartan spouse away.
Faintly she scream'd, and ev'n her eyes confess'd
She rather would be thought, than was distress'd.
Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?
Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,
Proud of the present, to the future blind!
Secure of fate, while Cymon plows the sea,
And steers to Candy with his conquer'd prey,
Scarce the third glass of measur'd hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun;
The promise of a storm; the shifting gales
Forsoke by fits, and fill the flagging sails;
Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard,
And night came on, not by degrees prepar'd,
But all at once; at once the winds arise,
The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
In vain the master issues out commands,
In vain the trembling sailors ply their hands:
The tempest unforeseen prevents their care,
And from the first they labour in despair.
The giddy ship betwixt the winds and tides,
Forc'd back, and forwards, in a circle rides,
Stunn'd with the different blows; then shoots amain,
Till, counterbuff'd, she stops, and sleeps again.
Not more aghast the proud archangel fell,
Plung'd from the height of heaven to deepest hell,

Than

Than stood the lover of his love possess'd,
 Now curs'd the more, the more he had been blest'd;
 More anxious for her danger than his own,
 Death he defies; but would be lost alone.

Sad Iphigene to womanish complaints
 Adds pious prayers, and wearies all the faints;
 Ev'n if she could, her love she would repent, ,
 But, since she cannot, dreads the punishment:!
 Her forfeit faith, and Pasimond betray'd,
 Are ever present, and her crime upbraid.
 She blames herself, nor blames her lover less,
 Augments her anger, as her fears increase:
 From her own back the burden would remove,
 And lays the load on his ungovern'd love,
 Which interposing durst, in heaven's despite,
 Invade, and violate another's right:
 The powers incens'd a while deferr'd his pain,
 And made him master of his vows in vain:
 But soon they punish'd his presumptuous pride;
 That for his daring enterprize she dy'd;
 Who rather not resisted, than comply'd.

Then, impotent of mind, with alter'd sense,
 She hugg'd th' offender, and forgave th' offence,
 Sex to the last: mean time with sails declin'd
 The wandering vessel drove before the wind:
 Toss'd and retoss'd, aloft, and then below,
 Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,
 But every moment wait the coming blow.
 Thus blindly driven, by breaking day they view'd
 The land before them, and their fears renew'd;

The

The land was welcome, but the tempest bore
The threaten'd ship against a rocky shore.

A winding bay was near; to this they bent,
And just escap'd; their force already spent:
Secure from storms, and panting from the sea,
The land unknown at leisure they survey;
And saw (but soon their sickly sight withdrew)
The rising towers of Rhodes at distant view;
And curs'd the hostile shore of Pasimond,
Sav'd from the seas, and shipwreck'd on the ground.

The frighted sailors try'd their strength in vain
To turn the stern, and tempt the stormy main;
But the stiff wind withstood the labouring oar,
And forc'd them forward on the fatal shore!
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian strand,
And the ship moor'd constrains the crew to land:
Yet still they might be safe, because unknown,
But, as ill fortune seldom comes alone,
The vessel they dismiss'd was driven before,
Already shelter'd on their native shore;
Known each, they know; but each with change of cheer;
The vanquish'd side exults; the victors fear;
Not them but theirs, made prisoners ere they fight,
Despairing conquest, and depriv'd of flight.

The country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia swarms;
Mouths without hands; maintain'd at vast expence,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence:
Stout once a month they march, a blustering band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand;

This

This was the morn when, issuing on the guard,
 Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepar'd
 Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
 Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.

The cowards would have fled, but that they knew
 Themselves so many, and their foes so few:
 But, crowding on, the last the first impel:
 Till overborn with weight the Cyprians fell.
 Cymon enslav'd, who first the war begun,
 And Iphigene once more is lost and won.

Deep in a dungeon was the captive cast,
 Depriv'd of day, and held in fetters fast:
 His life was only spar'd at their request,
 Whom taken he so nobly had releas'd:
 But Iphigenia was the ladies care,
 Each in their turn address'd to treat the fair;
 While Pasimond and his the nuptial feast prepare.

Her secret soul to Cymon was inclin'd,
 But she must suffer what her fates assign'd;
 So passive is the church of woman-kind.
 What worse to Cymon could his fortune deal,
 Roll'd to the lowest spoke of all her wheel?
 It rested to dismiss the downward weight,
 Or raise him upward to his former height;
 The latter pleas'd; and love (concern'd the most)
 Prepar'd th' amends, for what by love he lost.

The fire of Pasimond had left a son,
 Though younger, yet for courage early known,
 Ormisda call'd, to whom by promise ty'd,
 A Rhodian beauty was the destin'd bride;

Cassandra was her name, above the rest
Renown'd for birth, with fortune amply blest'd.
Lyfimachus, who rul'd the Rhodian state,
Was then by choice their annual magistrate:
He lov'd Cassandra too with equal fire,
But fortune had not favour'd his desire;
Cross'd by her friends, by her not disapprov'd,
Nor yet preferr'd, or like Ormisda lov'd:
So stood th' affair: some little hope remain'd,
That, should his rival chance to lose, he gain'd.

Mean time young Pasimond his marriage press'd,
Ordain'd the nuptial day, prepar'd the feast;
And frugally resolv'd (the charge to shun,
Which would be double should he wed alone)
To join his brother's bridal with his own.

}

Lyfimachus, oppress'd with mortal grief,
Receiv'd the news, and study'd quick relief:
The fatal day approach'd; if force were us'd,
The magistrate his public trust abus'd;
To justice liable, as law requir'd;
For, when his office ceas'd, his power expir'd:
While power remain'd, the means were in his hand
By force to seize, and then forsake the land:
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,
A slave to fame, but, more a slave to love:
Restraining others, yet himself not free,
Made impotent by power, debas'd by dignity.
Both sides he weigh'd: but, after much debate,
The man prevail'd above the magistrate.

Love

Love never fails to master what he finds,
 But works a different way in different minds,
 The fool enlightens, and the wise he blinds.
 This youth proposing to possess and 'scape,
 Began in murder, to conclude in rape:
 Unprais'd by me, though heaven sometimes may bless
 An impious act with undeserv'd success:
 The great it seems are privileg'd alone
 To punish all injustice but their own.
 But here I stop, not daring to proceed,
 Yet blush to flatter an unrighteous deed:
 For crimes are but permitted, not decreed.

Resolv'd on force, his wit the prætor bent,
 To find the means that might secure th' event;
 Nor long he labour'd, for his lucky thought
 In captive Cymon found the friend he sought;
 Th' example pleas'd: the cause and crime the same;
 An injur'd lover, and a ravish'd dame.
 How much he durst he knew by what he dar'd,
 The less he had to lose, the less he car'd,
 To manage loathsome life when love was the reward.

This ponder'd well, and fix'd on his intent,
 In depth of night he for the prisoner sent;
 In secret sent, the public view to shun,
 Then with a sober smile he thus begun.
 The powers above, who bounteously bestow
 Their gifts and graces on mankind below,
 Yet prove our merit first, nor blindly give
 To such as are not worthy to receive:

For

For valour and for virtue they provide
Their due reward, but first they must be try'd:
These fruitful seeds within your mind they sow'd;
'Twas yours t' improve the talent they bestow'd:
They gave you to be born of noble kind,
They gave you love to lighten up your mind,
And purge the grosser parts; they gave you care
To please, and courage to deserve the fair.

Thus far they try'd you, and by proof they found
The grain intrusted in a grateful ground:
But still the great experiment remain'd,
They suffer'd you to lose the prize you gain'd;
That you might learn the gift was theirs alone:
And when restor'd, to them the blessing own.
Restor'd it soon will be; the means prepar'd,
The difficulty smooth'd, the danger shar'd:
Be but yourself, the care to me resign,
Then Iphigene is yours, Cassandra mine.
Your rival Pafimond pursues your life,
Impatient to revenge his ravish'd wife,
But yet not his; to-morrow is behind,
And love our fortunes in one band has join'd:
Two brothers are our foes, Ormisda mine,
As much declar'd as Pafimond is thine:
To-morrow must their common vows be ty'd:
With love to friend, and fortune for our guide,
Let both resolve to die, or each redeem a bride.

Right I have none, nor hast thou much to plead;
'Tis force, when done, must justify the deed:

Our talk perform'd, we next prepare for flight:
 And let the losers talk in vain of right:
 We with the fair will fail before the wind,
 If they are griev'd, I leave the laws behind.
 Speak thy resolves: if now thy courage droop,
 Despair in prison, and abandon hope:
 But if thou dar'st in arms thy love regain
 (For liberty without thy love were vain);
 Then second my design to seize the prey,
 Or lead to second rape, for well thou know'st the way.

Said Cymon overjoy'd, do thou propose
 The means to fight, and only shew the foes:
 For from the first, when love had fir'd my mind,
 Resolv'd I left the care of life behind.

To this the bold Lyfimachus reply'd,
 Let heaven be neuter, and the sword decide;
 The spoufals are prepar'd, already play
 The minstrels, and provoke the tardy day:
 By this the brides are wak'd, their grooms are dress'd;
 All Rhodes is summon'd to the nuptial feast,
 All but myself the sole unbidden guest. }
 Unbidden though I am, I will be there,
 And join'd by thee, intend to joy the fair.

Now hear the rest; when day resigns the light,
 And chearful torches gild the jolly night,
 Be ready at my call; my chosen few
 With arms administer'd shall aid thy crew.
 Then entering unexpected will we seize
 Our destin'd prey, from men dissolv'd in ease;

By

By wine disabled, unprepar'd for fight:
And hastening to the seas, suborn our flight:
The seas are ours, for I command the fort,
A ship well-mann'd expects us in the port:
If they, or if their friends, the prize contest,
Death shall attend the man who dares resist.

It pleas'd! the prisoner to his hold retir'd,
His troop with equal emulation fir'd,
All fix'd to fight, and all their wonted work requir'd. }
The fun arose; the streets were throng'd around,
The palace open'd, and the posts were crown'd.
The double bridegroom at the door attends
Th' expected spouse, and entertains the friends:
They meet, they lead to church, the priests invoke
The powers, and feed the flames with fragrant smoke.
This done, they feast, and at the close of night
By kinkled torches vary their delight, }
These lead the lively dance, and those the brimming
bowls invite.

Now, at th' appointed place and hour assign'd
With souls resolv'd the ravishers were join'd:
Three bands are form'd; the first is sent before
To favour the retreat, and guard the shore;
The second at the palace-gate is plac'd,
And up the lofty stairs ascend the last:
A peaceful troop they seem with shining vests,
But coats of mail beneath secure their breasts.

Dauntless they enter, Cymon at their head,
And find the feast renew'd, the table spread:

Sweet voices, mix'd with instrumental sounds,
 Ascend the vaulted roof, the vaulted roof rebounds.
 When like the harpies rushing through the hall
 The sudden troop appears, the tables fall,
 Their smoaking load is on the pavement thrown;
 Each ravisher prepares to seize his own;
 The brides, invaded with a rude embrace,
 Shriek out for aid, confusion fills the place.
 Quick to redeem the prey their plighted lords
 Advance, the palace gleams with shining swords.

But late is all defence, and succour vain;
 The rape is made, the ravishers remain:
 Two sturdy slaves were only sent before
 To bear the purchas'd prize in safety to the shore,
 The troop retires, the lovers close the rear,
 With forward faces not confessing fear:
 Backward they move, but scorn their pace to mend;
 Then seek the stairs, and with slow haste descend.

Fierce Pasimond, their passage to prevent,
 Thrust full on Cymon's back in his descent,
 The blade return'd unbath'd, and to the handle bent. }
 Stout Cymon soon remounts, and cleft in two
 His rival's head with one descending blow:
 And as the next in rank Ormisda stood,
 He turn'd the point; the sword inur'd to blood,
 Bor'd his unguarded breast, which pour'd a purple }
 flood.

With vow'd revenge the gathering crowd pursues,
 The ravishers turn head, the fight renews;

The

The hall is heap'd with corps; the sprinkled gore
Besmears the walls, and floats the marble floor.

Dispers'd at length the drunken squadron flies,
The victors to their vessel bear the prize;
And hear behind loud groans, and lamentable cries.

The crew with merry shouts their anchors weigh,
Then ply their oars, and brush the buxom sea,
While troops of gather'd Rhodians crowd the key.
What should the people do when left alone?

The governor and government are gone.

The public wealth to foreign parts convey'd;
Some troops disbanded, and the rest unpaid.
Rhodes is the sovereign of the sea no more;
Their ships unrigg'd, and spent their naval store;
They neither could defend, nor can pursue,
But grinn'd their teeth, and cast a helpless view:
In vain with darts a distant war they try,
Short, and more short, the missive weapons fly.
Mean while the ravishers their crimes enjoy,
And flying sails and sweeping oars employ:
The cliffs of Rhodes in little space are lost,
Jove's isle they seek; nor Jove denies his coast.

In safety landed on the Candian shore,
With generous wines their spirits they restore:
There Cymon with his Rhodian friend resides,
Both court, and wed at once the willing brides.
A war ensues, the Cretans own their cause,
Stiff to defend their hospitable laws:
Both parties lose by turns; and neither wins,
Till peace propounded by a truce begins.

The kindred of the slain forgive the deed,
But a short exile must for show precede:
The term expir'd, from Candia they remove;
And happy each, at home, enjoys his love.

T R A N S L A T I O N S

F R O M

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
L O R D R A D C L I F F E.

MY LORD,

THESE Miscellany Poems* are by many titles yours. The first they claim from your acceptance of my promise to present them to you, before some of them were yet in being. The rest are derived from your own merit, the exactness of your judgment in poetry, and the candour of your nature; easy to forgive some trivial faults when they come accompanied with countervailing beauties. But, after all, though these are your equitable claims to a dedication from other Poets, yet I must acknowledge a bribe in the case, which is your particular liking to my verses. It is a vanity common to all writers, to over-value their own productions; and it is better for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. For what other reason have I spent my life in so unprofitable a study? why am I grown old, in seeking so barren a reward as fame? The same parts and application, which have made me a poet, might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning and less honesty than myself. No government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein time-servers and blockheads will not be uppermost.

The

* Prefixed to the Third Volume of Dryden's Miscellany Poems, printed in 1693.

The persons are only changed, but the same jugglings in state, the same hypocrisy in religion, the same self-interest, and mismanagement, will remain for ever. Blood and money will be lavished in all ages, only for the preferment of new faces, with old consciences. There is too often a jaundice in the eyes of great men; they see not those whom they raise in the same colours with other men. All whom they affect, look golden to them; when the gilding is only in their own distempered sight. These considerations have given me a kind of contempt for those who have risen by unworthy ways. I am not ashamed to be little, when I see them so infamously great; neither do I know why the name of poet should be dishonourable to me if I am truly one, as I hope I am; for I will never do any thing that shall dishonour it. The notions of morality are known to all men: none can pretend ignorance of those ideas which are in-born in mankind: and if I see one thing, and practise the contrary, I must be disingenuous, not to acknowledge a clear truth, and base to act against the light of my own conscience. For the reputation of my honesty, no man can question it, who has any of his own: for that of my poetry, it shall either stand by its own merit; or fall for want of it. Ill writers are usually the sharpest censors: for they (as the best poet and the best patron said) when in the full perfection of decay, turn vinegar, and come again in play. Thus the corruption of a poet is the generation of a critick: I mean of a critick in the general acceptance of this age: for formerly they were quite another species

species of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works; to illustrate obscure beauties; to place some passages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modesty, who is not ostentatious of his wit; and, in short, to shield him from the ill-nature of those fellows, who were then called Zoili and Momi, and now take upon themselves the venerable name of censors. But neither Zoilus, nor he who endeavoured to defame Virgil, were ever adopted into the name of criticks by the ancients: what their reputation was then, we know; and their successors in this age deserve no better. Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? are they, who at best are but wits of the second order, and whose only credit amongst readers is what they obtained by being subservient to the fame of writers, are these become rebels of slaves, and usurpers of subjects; or, to speak in the most honourable terms of them, are they from our seconds become principals against us? does the ivy undermine the oak, which supports its weakness? what labour would it cost them to put in a better line, than the worst of those which they expunge in a true poet? Petronius, the greatest wit perhaps of all the Romans, yet when his envy prevailed upon his judgment to fall on Lucan, he fell himself in his attempt: he performed worse in his Essay of the Civil War, than the author of the *Pharsalia*: and avoiding his errors, has made greater of his own. Julius Scaliger would needs turn down Homer, and abdicate him after the possession of three thousand years:

years: has he succeeded in his attempt? he has indeed shown us some of those imperfections in him, which are incident to human kind: but who had not rather be that Homer than this Scaliger? You see the same hypercritick, when he endeavours to mend the beginning of Claudian (a faulty poet, and living in a barbarous age) yet how short he comes of him, and substitutes such verses of his own as deserve the ferula. What a censure has he made of Lucan, that he rather seems to bark than sing? would any but a dog, have made so snarling a comparison? one would have thought he had learned Latin, as late as they tell us he did Greek. Yet he came off, with a *pace tua*, by your good leave, Lucan; he called him not by those outrageous names, of fool, booby, and blockhead: he had somewhat more of good-manners than his successors, as he had much more knowledge. We have two sorts of those gentlemen in our nation: some of them proceeding with a seeming moderation and pretence of respect, to the dramatick writers of the last age, only scorn and vilify the present poets, to set up their predecessors. But this is only in appearance; for their real design is nothing less than to do honour to any man, besides themselves. Horace took notice of such men in his age: “Non in-
 “geniis favet ille, sepultis; nostra sed impugnat; nos
 “nostraque lividus odit.” It is not with an ultimate intention to pay reverence to the manes of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, that they commend their writings, but to throw dirt on the writers of this age: their declaration is one thing, and their practice is another.

ther. By a seeming veneration to our fathers, they would thrust out us their lawful issue, and govern us themselves, under a specious pretence of reformation. If they could compass their intent, what would wit and learning get by such a change? if we are bad poets, they are worse; and when any of their woeful pieces come abroad, the difference is so great betwixt them and good writers, that there need no criticisms on our part to decide it. When they describe the writers of this age, they draw such monstrous figures of them, as resemble none of us: our pretended pictures are so unlike, that it is evident we never sate to them; they are all grotesque; the products of their wild imaginations, things out of nature, so far from being copied from us, that they resemble nothing that ever was, or ever can be. But there is another sort of insects, more venomous than the former. Those who manifestly aim at the destruction of our poetical church and state; who allow nothing to their country-men, either of this or of the former age. These attack the living by raking up the ashes of the dead; well knowing that if they can subvert their original title to the stage, we who claim under them must fall of course. Peace be to the venerable shades of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson: none of the living will presume to have any competition with them: as they were our predecessors, so they were our masters. We trail our plays under them; but (as at the funerals of a Turkish emperor) our ensigns are furled or dragged upon the ground, in honour to the dead; so we may lawfully advance our own, afterwards,

wards, to show that we succeed: if less in dignity, yet on the same foot and title, which we think too we can maintain against the insolence of our own janizaries. If I am the man, as I have reason to believe, who am seemingly courted, and secretly undermined; I think I shall be able to defend myself, when I am openly attacked. And to shew besides that the Greek writers only gave us the rudiments of a stage which they never finished: that many of the tragedies in the former age amongst us, were without comparison beyond those of Sophocles and Euripides. But, at present, I have neither the leisure nor the means for such an undertaking. It is ill going to law for an estate, with him who is in possession of it, and enjoys the present profits, to feed his cause. But the "*quantum mutatus*" may be remembered in due time. In the mean while, I leave the world to judge, who gave the provocation.

This, my Lord, is, I confess, a long digression from Miscellany Poems to Modern Tragedies: but I have the ordinary excuse of an injured man, who will be telling his tale unseasonably to his betters; though, at the same time, I am certain, you are so good a friend, as to take a concern in all things which belong to one who so truly honours you. And besides, being yourself a critick of the genuine sort, who have read the best authors in their own languages, who perfectly distinguish of their several merits, and in general prefer them to the moderns; yet, I know, you judge for the English tragedies, against the Greek and Latin, as well as against the French, Italian, and Spanish, of these latter
ages.

ages. Indeed there is a vast difference betwixt arguing like Perault in behalf of the French poets, against Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the English poets their undoubted due of excelling Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For if we, or our greater fathers, have not yet brought the drama to an absolute perfection, yet at least we have carried it much farther than those ancient Greeks; who, beginning from a Chorus, could never totally exclude it, as we have done; who find it an unprofitable incumbrance, without any necessity of entertaining it amongst us; and without the possibility of establishing it here, unless it were supported by a publick charge. Neither can we accept of those lay-bishops, as some call them, who, under pretence of reforming the stage, would intrude themselves upon us as our superiors, being indeed incompetent judges of what is manners, what religion, and least of all, what is poetry and good sense. I can tell them in behalf of all my fellows, that when they come to exercise a jurisdiction over us, they shall have the stage to themselves, as they have the laurel. As little can I grant, that the French dramattick writers excel the English: our authors as far surpass them in genius, as our soldiers excel theirs in courage: it is true, in conduct they surpass us either way: yet that proceeds not so much from their greater knowledge, as from the difference of tastes in the two nations. They content themselves with a thin design, without episodes, and managed by few persons. Our audience will not be pleased but with variety of accidents, an underplot, and many actors.

actors. They follow the ancients too servilely, in the mechanick rules, and we assume too much licence to ourselves, in keeping them only in view, at too great a distance. But if our audience had their tastes, our poets could more easily comply with them, than the French writers could come up to the sublimity of our thoughts, or to the difficult variety of our designs. However it be, I dare establish it for a rule of practice on the stage, that we are bound to please those whom we pretend to entertain; and that at any price, religion and good-manners only excepted; and I care not much, if I give this handle to our bad illiterate poetasters, for the defence of their *SCRIPTIONS*, as they call them. There is a sort of merit in delighting the spectators; which is a name more proper for them, than that of auditors: or else Horace is in the wrong, when he commends Lucilius for it. But these common-places I mean to treat at greater leisure: in the mean time, submitting that little I have said, to your Lordship's approbation, or your censure, and choosing rather to entertain you this way, as you are a judge of writing, than to oppress your modesty with other commendations; which, though they are your due, yet would not be equally received in this satirical and censorious age. That which cannot without injury be denied to you, is the easiness of your conversation, far from affectation or pride: not denying even to enemies their just praises. And this, if I would dwell on any theme of this nature, is no vulgar commendation to your Lordship. Without flattery, my Lord, you have it in
your

your nature, to be a patron and encourager of good poets, but your fortune has not yet put into your hands the opportunity of expressing it. What you will be hereafter, may be more than guessed, by what you are at present. You maintain the character of a nobleman; without that haughtiness which generally attends too many of the nobility; and when you converse with gentlemen, you forget not that you have been of their order. You are married to the daughter of a king, who, amongst her other high perfections, has derived from him a charming behaviour, a winning goodness, and a majestic person. The Muses and the Graces are the ornaments of your family; while the Muse sings, the Grace accompanies her voice: even the servants of the Muses have sometimes had the happiness to hear her; and to receive their inspirations from her.

I will not give myself the liberty of going farther; for it is so sweet to wander in a pleasing way, that I should never arrive at my journey's end. To keep myself from being belated in my letter, and tiring your attention, I must return to the place where I was setting out. I humbly dedicate to your Lordship, my own labours in this Miscellany: at the same time, not arrogating to myself the privilege of inscribing to you, the works of others who are joined with me in this undertaking, over which I can pretend no right. Your lady and you have done me the favour to hear me read my translations of Ovid; and you both seemed not to be displeased with them. Whether it be the partiality of an old man to his youngest child, I know not: but

they appear to me the best of all my endeavours in this kind. Perhaps this poet is more easy to be translated than some others, whom I have lately attempted: perhaps too, he was more according to my genius. He is certainly more palatable to the reader, than any of the Roman wits; though some of them are more lofty, some more instructive, and others more correct. He had learning enough to make him equal to the best. But as his verse came easily, he wanted the toil of application to amend it. He is often luxuriant both in his fancy and expressions, and, as it has lately been observed, not always natural. If wit be pleasantry, he has it to excess; but if it be propriety, Lucretius, Horace, and above all, Virgil, are his superiors. I have said so much of him already, in my preface to his Heroical Epistles, that there remains little to be added in this place: for my own part, I have endeavoured to copy his character what I could in this translation, even perhaps farther than I should have done; to his very faults. Mr. Chapman, in his translation of Homer, professes to have done it somewhat paraphrastically, and that on set purpose; his opinion being, that a good poet is to be translated in that manner. I remember not the reason which he gives for it: but I suppose it is, for fear of omitting any of his excellencies: sure I am, that if it be a fault, it is much more pardonable than that of those, who run into the other extreme of a literal and close translation, where the poet is confined so strictly to his author's words, that he wants elbow-room to express his elegancies. He leaves him obscure;
he

he leaves him prose, where he found him verse: and no better than thus has Ovid been served by the so much admired Sandys. This is at least the idea which I have remaining of his translation; for I never read him since I was a boy. They who take him upon content, from the praises which their fathers gave him, may inform their judgment by reading him again, and see (if they understand the original) what is become of Ovid's poetry, in his version; whether it be not all, or the greatest part of it, evaporated: but this proceeded from the wrong judgment of the age in which he lived. They neither knew good verse, nor loved it; they were scholars, it is true, but they were pedants. And for a just reward of their pedantic pains, all their translations want to be translated into English.

If I flatter not myself, or if my friends have not flattered me, I have given my author's sense, for the most part, truly: for to mistake sometimes, is incident to all men; and not to follow the Dutch commentators always, may be forgiven to a man who thinks them, in the general, heavy gross-witted fellows, fit only to gloss on their own dull poets. But I leave a farther satire on their wit, till I have a better opportunity to shew how much I love and honour them. I have likewise attempted to restore Ovid to his native sweetness, easiness, and smoothness; and to give my poetry a kind of cadence, and, as we call it, a run of verse, as like the original, as the English can come up to the Latin. As he seldom uses any Synalephas, so I have endeavoured to avoid them, as often as I could: I have likewise given

him his own turns, both on the words and on the thought, which I cannot say are inimitable, because I have copied them; and so may others, if they use the same diligence: but certainly they are wonderfully graceful in this poet. Since I have named the Synalepha, which is cutting off one vowel immediately before another, I will give an example of it from Chapman's Homer, which lies before me; for the benefit of those who understand not the Latin Prosodia. It is in the first line of the argument to the first Iliad.

Apollo's priest to th' Argive fleet doth bring, &c.
 There we see he makes it not the Argive, but th' Argive, to shun the shock of the two vowels, immediately following each other; but, in his second argument, in the same page, he gives a bad example of the quite contrary kind:

Alpha the prayer of Chryses sings;
 The army's plague, the strife of kings.

In these words *the army's*, *the* ending with a vowel, and *army's* beginning with another vowel, without cutting off the first, which by it had been *th' army's*, there remains a most horrible ill-sounding gap betwixt those words. I cannot say that I have every way observed the rule of the Synalepha in my translation; but where-soever I have not, it is a fault in the found: the French and the Italians have made it an inviolable precept in their versification; therein following the severe example of the Latin poet. Our countrymen have not yet reformed their poetry so far, but content themselves with
 following

following the licentious practice of the Greeks; who, though they sometimes use Synalephas, yet make no difficulty, very often, to sound one vowel upon another; as Homer does, in the very first line of Alpha. Μένιν ἄειδε Θέα Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆϊ. It is true, indeed, that in the second line, in these words *μοῖρ' Ἀχαιοῖς*, and *ἄλλ' ἔθηκεν*, the Synalepha in revenge is twice observed. But it becomes us, for the sake of Euphony, rather “*Musas colere severiores,*” with the Romans, than to give into the looseness of the Grecians.

I have tired myself, and have been summoned by the press to send away this Dedication, otherwise I had exposed some other faults, which are daily committed by our English poets; which, with care and observation, might be amended. For, after all, our language is both copious, significant, and majestic, and might be reduced into a more harmonious sound. But, for want of public encouragement, in this iron age, we are so far from making any progress in the improvement of our tongue, that in few years we shall speak and write as barbarously as our neighbours.

Notwithstanding my haste, I cannot forbear to tell your Lordship, that there are two fragments of Homer translated in this Miscellany; one by Mr. Congreve (whom I cannot mention without the honour which is due to his excellent parts, and that entire affection which I bear him) and the other by myself. Both the subjects are pathetic, and I am sure my friend has added to the tenderness which he found in the original, and, without flattery, surpassed his author. Yet I must

needs say this in reference to Homer, that he is much more capable of exciting the manly passions than those of grief and pity: To cause admiration, is indeed the proper and adequate design of an epic poem: and in that he has excelled even Virgil; yet, without presuming to arraign our master, I may venture to affirm, that he is somewhat too talkative, and more than somewhat too digressive. This is so manifest, that it cannot be denied in that little parcel which I have translated, perhaps too literally: there Andromache, in the midst of her concernment, and fright for Hector, runs off her bias, to tell him a story of her pedigree, and of the lamentable death of her father, her mother, and her seven brothers. The devil was in Hector if he knew not all this matter, as well as she who told it him; for she had been his bedfellow for many years together: and if he knew it, then it must be confessed, that Homer, in this long digression, has rather given her his own character, than that of the fair lady whom he paints. His dear friends the commentators, who never fail him at a pinch, will needs excuse him, by making the present sorrow of Andromache, to occasion the remembrance of all the past: but others think that she had enough to do with that grief which now oppressed her, without running for assistance to her family. Virgil, I am confident, would have omitted such a work of supererogation. But Virgil had the gift of expressing much in little, and sometimes in silence: for though he yielded much to Homer in invention, he more excelled him in his admirable judgment. He drew the passion of Dido
for

for Æneas, in the most lively and most natural colours imaginable: Homer was ambitious enough of moving pity; for he has attempted twice on the same subject of Hector's death: first, when Priam and Hecuba beheld his corpse, which was dragged after the chariot of Achilles; and then in the lamentation which was made over him, when his body was redeemed by Priam; and the same persons again bewailed his death, with a chorus of others to help the cry. But if this last excite compassion in you, as I doubt not but it will, you are more obliged to the translator than the poet: for Homer, as I observed before, can move rage better than he can pity: he stirs up the irascible appetite, as our philosophers call it; he provokes to murder, and the destruction of God's images; he forms and equips those ungodly man-killers, whom we poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men, who can never enjoy quiet in themselves, till they have taken it from all the world. This is Homer's commendation; and such as it is, the lovers of peace, or at least of more moderate heroism, will never envy him. But let Homer and Virgil contend for the prize of honour betwixt themselves; I am satisfied they will never have a third concurrent. I wish Mr. Congreve had the leisure to translate him, and the world the good-nature and justice to encourage him in that noble design, of which he is more capable than any man I know. The Earl of Mulgrave and Mr. Waller, two the best judges of our age, have assured me, that they could never read over the translation of Chapman, without incredible pleasure

and extreme transport. This admiration of theirs must needs proceed from the author himself: for the translator has thrown him down as low as harsh numbers, improper English, and a monstrous length of verse, could carry him. What then would he appear in the harmonious version of one of the best writers, living in a much better age than was the last? I mean for versification, and the art of numbers: for in the drama we have not arrived to the pitch of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. But here, my Lord, I am forced to break off abruptly, without endeavouring at a compliment in the close. This Miscellany is, without dispute, one of the best of the kind, which has hitherto been extant in our tongue. At least, as Sir Samuel Tuke has said before me, a modest man may praise what is not his own. My fellows have no need of any protection: but I humbly recommend my part of it, as much as it deserves, to your patronage and acceptance, and all the rest to your forgiveness. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most

Obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

THE

T H E
F I R S T B O O K
O F
O V I D ' S M E T A M O R P H O S E S .

OF bodies chang'd to various forms I sing:
Ye Gods; from whence these miracles did spring,
Inspire my numbers with celestial heat;
Till I my long laborious work complete;
And add perpetual tenor to my rhymes,
Deduc'd from nature's birth, to Cæsar's times.

Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
And heaven's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of nature, if a face;
Rather a rude and indigested mass:
A lifeless lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd,
Of jarring seeds, and justly Chaos nam'd.
No sun was lighted up the world to view;
No moon did yet her blunted horns renew:
Nor yet was earth suspended in the sky;
Nor, pois'd, did on her own foundations lie:
Nor seas about the shores their arms had thrown;
But earth, and air, and water, were in one.
Thus air was void of light, and earth unstable,
And water's dark abyss unnavigable.

No

No certain form on any was impress;
All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest.
For hot and cold were in one body fixt,
And soft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.

But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,
To these intestine discords put an end.

Then earth from air, and seas from earth were driven,
And grosser air sunk from ætherial heaven.

Thus disembroil'd, they take their proper place;

The next of kin contiguously embrace;

And foes are funder'd by a larger space.

The force of fire ascended first on high,

And took its dwelling in the vaulted sky.

Then air succeeds, in lightness next to fire;

Whose atoms from unactive earth retire.

Earth sinks beneath, and draws a numerous throng
Of ponderous, thick, unwieldy seeds along.

About her coasts unruly waters roar,

And, rising on a ridge, insult the shore.

Thus when the God, whatever God was he,

Had form'd the whole, and made the parts agree,

That no unequal portions might be found,

He moulded earth into a spacious round:

Then, with a breath, he gave the winds to blow;

And bade the congregated waters flow.

He adds the running springs, and standing lakes;

And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.

Some part in earth are swallow'd up, the most

In ample oceans, disembogued, are lost,

He

He shades the woods, the vallies he refrains
With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.

And as five zones th' æthèrial regions bind,
Five, correspondent, are to earth assign'd:
The sun with rays, directly darting down,
Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone:
The two beneath the distant poles complain
Of endless winter, and perpetual rain.
Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold
The temper that partakes of hot and cold.
The fields of liquid air, inclosing all,
Surround the compass of this earthly ball:
The lighter parts lie next the fires above;
The grosser near the watery surface move:
Thick clouds are spread, and storms engender there,
And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear,
And winds that on their wings cold winter bear. }
Nor were those blustering brethren left at large,
On seas and shores their fury to discharge:
Bound as they are, and circumscrib'd in place,
They rend the world, resistless, where they pass;
And mighty marks of mischief leave behind;
Such is the rage of their tempestuous kind.
First Eurus to the rising morn is sent,
(The regions of the balmy continent)
And Eastern realms, where early Persians run,
To greet the blest appearance of the sun.
Westward the wanton Zephyr wings his flight,
Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light:

Fierce

Fierce Boreas with his offspring issues forth,
 T' invade the frozen waggon of the North.
 While frowning Aufter seeks the southern sphere,
 And rots, with endless rain, th' unwholsome year.

High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,
 The God a clearer space for heaven design'd;
 Where fields of light and liquid æther flow,
 Purg'd from the ponderous dregs of earth below.

Scarce had the power distinguish'd these, when straight
 The stars, no longer overlaid with weight,
 Exert their heads from underneath the mafs, }
 And upward shoot, and kindle as they pass,
 And with diffusive light adorn the heavenly place. }
 Then, every void of nature to supply,
 With forms of Gods he fills the vacant sky:
 New herds of beasts he sends, the plains to share; }
 New colonies of birds, to people air; }
 And to their oozy beds the finny fish repair.
 A creature of a more exalted kind
 Was wanting yet, and then was man design'd:
 Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,
 For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest:
 Whether with particles of heavenly fire
 The God of nature did his soul inspire;
 Or earth, but new divided from the sky,
 And pliant still, retain'd th' ætherial energy:
 Which wise Prometheus temper'd into paste,
 And, mixt with living streams, the godlike image cast.
 Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
 Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,

Man

Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies.
From such rude principles our form began,
And earth was metamorphos'd into man.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

The golden age was first; when man, yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew;
And, with a native bent, did good pursue. }
Unforc'd by punishment, unaw'd by fear,
His words were simple, and his soul sincere:
Needless was written-law, where none oppress;
The law of man was written in his breast:
No suppliant crowds before the judge appear'd;
No court erected yet, nor cause was heard; }
But all was safe, for conscience was their guard.
The mountain-trees in distant prospect please,
Ere yet the pine descended to the seas;
Ere sails were spread, new oceans to explore; }
And happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
Confin'd their wishes to their native shore.
No walls were yet, nor fence, nor mote, nor mound;
Nor drum was heard, nor trumpet's angry sound:
Nor swords were forg'd; but, void of care and crime,
The soft creation slept away their time.
The teeming earth, yet guiltless of the plough,
And unprovok'd, did fruitful stores allow:
Content with food, which nature freely bred,
On wildings and on strawberries they fed;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest,
And falling acorns furnish'd out a feast.

The

The flowers unfown in fields and meadows reign'd;
And western winds immortal Spring maintain'd.
In following years the bearded corn ensu'd
From earth unask'd, nor was that earth renew'd.
From veins of vallies milk and nectar broke;
And honey sweating through the pores of oak.

THE SILVER AGE.

But when good Saturn, banish'd from above,
Was driven to hell, the world was under Jove.
Succeeding times a silver age behold,
Excelling brass, but more excell'd by gold.
Then Summer, Autumn, Winter, did appear;
And Spring was but a season of the year.
The sun his annual course obliquely made,
Good days contracted, and enlarg'd the bad.
Then air with fultry heats began to glow,
The wings of winds were clogg'd with ice and snow;
And shivering mortals, into houses driven,
Sought shelter from th' inclemency of heaven.
Those houses, then, were caves, or homely sheds,
With twining ozers fenc'd, and moss their beds.
Then ploughs, for seed, the fruitful furrows broke,
And oxen labour'd first beneath the yoke.

THE BRAZEN AGE.

To this next came in course the brazen age,
A warlike offspring, prompt to bloody rage,
Not impious yet——

THE

THE IRON AGE.

—Hard steel succeeded then;

And stubborn as the metal were the men.

Truth, Modesty, and Shame, the world forsook:

Fraud, Avarice, and Force, their places took.

Then sails were spread to every wind that blew;

Raw were the sailors, and the depths were new:

Trees rudely hollow'd, did the waves sustain:

Ere ships in triumph plough'd the watery plain.

Then land-marks limited to each his right:

For all before was common as the light.

Nor was the ground alone requir'd to bear

Her annual income to the crooked share;

But greedy mortals, rummaging her store,

Digg'd from her entrails first the precious ore;

Which next to hell the prudent Gods had laid;

And that alluring ill to sight display'd;

Thus cursed steel, and more accursed gold,

Gave mischief birth, and made that mischief bold:

And double death did wretched man invade,

By steel assaulted, and by gold betray'd.

Now (brandish'd weapons glittering in their hands)

Mankind is broken loose from moral bands;

No rights of hospitality remain:

The guest, by him who harbour'd him, is slain:

The son-in-law pursues the father's life:

The wife her husband murders, he the wife.

The step-dame poison for the son prepares,

The son inquires into his father's years.

Faith

Faith flies, and Piety in exile mourns;
And Justice, here oppress'd, to heaven returns.

THE GIANTS WAR.

Nor were the Gods themselves more safe above;
Against beleaguer'd heaven the giants move.
Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains mountains lie,
To make their mad approaches to the sky.
Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time
T' avenge with thunder their audacious crime:
Red lightning play'd along the firmament,
And their demolish'd works to pieces rent.
Sing'd with the flames, and with the bolts transfix'd,
With native earth their blood the monsters mix'd;
The blood, indued with animating heat,
Did in th' impregnate earth new sons beget:
They, like the seed from which they sprung, accurst,
Against the Gods immortal hatred nurs't:
An impious, arrogant, and cruel brood;
Expressing their original from blood.
Which when the king of Gods beheld from high
(Withal revolving in his memory,
What he himself had found on earth of late,
Lycaon's guilt, and his inhuman treat)
He sigh'd, nor longer with his pity strove;
But kindled to a wrath becoming Jove;
Then call'd a general council of the Gods;
Who, summon'd, issue from their blest abodes,
And fill th' assembly with a shining train,
A way there is, in heaven's expanded plain,

Which,

Which, when the skies are clear, is seen below,
 And mortals by the name of milky know.
 The ground-work is of stars; through which the road
 Lies open to the thunderer's abode.
 The Gods of greater nations dwell around,
 And, on the right and left the palace bound;
 The commons where they can; the nobler sort,
 With winding-doors wide open, front the court.
 This place, as far as earth with heaven may vie,
 I dare to call the Louvre of the sky.
 When all were plac'd, in seats distinctly known,
 And he their father had assum'd the throne,
 Upon his ivory sceptre first he leant,
 Then shook his head that shook the firmament:
 Air, earth, and seas, obey'd th' almighty nod;
 And, with a general fear, confess'd the God.
 At length with indignation, thus he broke
 His awful silence, and the powers bespoke:

I was not more concern'd in that debate
 Of empire, when our universal state
 Was put to hazard, and the giant race
 Our captive skies were ready to embrace:
 For, though the foe was fierce, the seeds of all
 Rebellion sprung from one original;
 Now wheresoever ambient waters glide,
 All are corrupt, and all must be destroy'd.
 Let me this holy protestation make:
 By hell and hell's inviolable lake,
 I try'd whatever in the God-head lay,
 But gangren'd members must be lopt away,
 Before the nobler parts are tainted to decay.

There dwells below a race of Demi-gods,
Of nymphs in waters, and of fawns in woods:
Who, though not worthy yet in heaven to live,
Let them at least enjoy that earth we give.
Can these be thought securely lodg'd below,
When I myself, who no superior know,
I, who have heaven and earth at my command,
Have been attempted by Lycaon's hand?

At this a murmur through the synod went,
And with one voice they vote his punishment.
Thus, when conspiring traitors dar'd to doom
The fall of Cæsar, and in him of Rome,
The nations trembled with a pious fear;
All anxious for their earthly thunderer:
Nor was their care, O Cæsar, less esteem'd
By thee, than that of heaven for Jove was deem'd:
Who with his hand, and voice, did first restrain
Their murmurs, then resum'd his speech again.
The Gods to silence were compos'd, and fate
With reverence due to his superior state.

Cancel your pious cares; already he
Has paid his debt to justice, and to me.
Yet what his crimes, and what my judgments were,
Remains for me thus briefly to declare.
The clamours of this vile degenerate age,
The cries of orphans, and th' oppressor's rage,
Had reach'd the stars; I will descend, said I,
In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
Disguis'd in human shape, I travell'd round
The world, and more than what I heard, I found.

O'er

O'er Mænalus I took my sleepy way,
By caverns infamous for beasts of prey:
Then cross'd Cyllene, and the piny shade,
More infamous by curst Lycaon made:
Dark night had covered heaven and earth, before
I enter'd his unhospitable door.
Just at my entrance, I display'd the sign
That somewhat was approaching of divine.
The prostrate people pray; the tyrant grins;
And, adding prophanation to his sins,
I'll try, said he, and if a God appear,
To prove his deity shall cost him dear.
'Twas late; the graceless wretch my death prepares,
When I should soundly sleep, oppress'd with cares:
This dire experiment he chose, to prove
If I were mortal, or undoubted Jove:
But first he had resolv'd to taste my power:
Not long before, but in a luckless hour,
Some legates sent from the Molossian state,
Were on a peaceful errand come to treat:
Of these he murders one, he boils the flesh,
And lays the mangled morsels in a dish:
Some part he roasts; then serves it up so dress'd,
And bids me welcome to this human feast.
Mov'd with disdain, the table I o'erturn'd;
And with avenging flames the palace burn'd.
The tyrant, in a fright, for shelter gains
The neighbouring fields, and scours along the plains.
Howling he fled, and fain he would have spoke,
But human voice his brutal tongue forsook.

About his lips the gather'd foam he churns,
 And, breathing slaughter, still with rage he burns,
 But on the bleating flock his fury turns.
 His mantle, now his hide, with rugged hairs
 Cleaves to his back; a famish'd face he bears;
 His arms descend, his shoulders sink away,
 To multiply his legs for chace of prey.
 He grows a wolf, his hoariness remains,
 And the same rage in other members reigns.
 His eyes still sparkle in a narrower space,
 His jaws retain the grin and violence of his face.

This was a single ruin, but not one
 Deserves so just a punishment alone.
 Mankind 's a monster, and th' ungodly times,
 Confederate into guilt, are sworn to crimes.
 All are alike involv'd in ill, and all
 Must by the same relentless fury fall.

Thus ended he; the greater Gods assent,
 By clamours urging his severe intent;
 The less fill up the cry for punishment.
 Yet still with pity they remember man;
 And mourn as much as heavenly spirits can.
 They ask, when those were lost of human birth,
 What he would do with all his waste of earth?
 If his dispeopled world he would resign
 To beasts, a mute, and more ignoble line?
 Neglected altars must no longer smoke,
 If none were left to worship and invoke.
 To whom the father of the Gods reply'd:
 Lay that unnecessary fear aside:
 Mine be the care new people to provide,

I will

I will from wondrous principles ordain
A race unlike the first, and try my skill again.

Already had he tofs'd the flaming brand,
And roll'd the thunder in his spacious hand;
Preparing to discharge on seas and land:
But stopt, for fear, thus violently driven,
The sparks should catch his axle-tree of heaven.
Remembering, in the Fates, a time, when fire
Should to the battlements of heaven aspire,
And all his blazing worlds above should burn,
And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.
His dire artillery thus dismiss'd, he bent
His thoughts to some securer punishment:
Concludes to pour a watery deluge down;
And, what he durst not burn, resolves to drown.

The northern breath, that freezes floods, he binds;
With all the race of cloud-dispelling winds:
The South he loos'd, who night and horror brings;
And fogs are shaken from his flaggy wings.
From his divided beard two streams he pours;
His head and rheumy eyes distil in showers.
With rain his robe and heavy mantle flow:
And lazy mists are lowering on his brow,
Still as he swept along, with his clench'd fist,
He squeez'd the clouds; th' imprison'd clouds resist:
The skies, from pole to pole, with peals resound;
And showers enlarg'd come pouring on the ground.
Then, clad in colours of a various die,
Junonian Iris breeds a new supply.

To feed the clouds impetuous rain descends;
 The bearded corn beneath the burthen bends:
 Defrauded clowns deplore their perish'd grains;
 And the long labours of the year are vain.

Nor from his patrimonial heaven alone
 Is Jove content to pour his vengeance down:
 Aid from his brother of the seas he craves,
 To help him with auxiliary waves.
 The watery tyrant calls his brooks and floods,
 Who roll from mossy caves, their moist abodes;
 And with perpetual urns his palace fill:
 To whom in brief he thus imparts his will:

Small exhortation needs; your powers employ:
 And this bad world (so Jove requires) destroy.
 Let loose the reins to all your watery store:
 Bear down the dams, and open every door.

The floods, by nature enemies to land,
 And proudly swelling with their new command,
 Remove the living stones that stopp'd their way,
 And, gushing from their source, augment the sea.
 Then, with his mace, their monarch struck the ground: }
 With inward trembling earth receiv'd the wound;
 And rising streams a ready passage found. }
 Th' expanded waters gather on the plain,
 They float the fields, and overtop the grain:
 Then, rushing onwards, with a sweepy sway,
 Bear flocks, and folds, and labouring hinds away.
 Nor safe their dwellings were; for, sap'd by flood,
 Their houses fell upon their household Gods.

The

The solid piles, too strongly built to fall,
High o'er their heads behold a watery wall.
Now seas and earth were in confusion lost ;
A world of waters, and without a coast.

One climbs a cliff; one in his boat is borne,
And ploughs above, where late he sow'd his corn.
Others o'er chimney tops and turrets row,
And drop their anchors on the meads below :
Or, downward driven, they bruise the tender vine ;
Or, toss'd aloft, are knock'd against a pine.
And where of late the kids had cropp'd the grass,
The monsters of the deep now take their place.
Insulting Nereids on the cities ride,
And wondering dolphins o'er the palace glide.
On leaves, and masts of mighty oaks, they brouze ;
And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
The frightened wolf now swims among the sheep ;
The yellow lion wanders in the deep :
His rapid force no longer helps the boar :
The stag swims faster than he ran before.
The fowls, long beating on their wings in vain,
Despair of land, and drop into the main.
Now hills and vales no more distinction know,
And level'd nature lies oppress'd below.
The most of mortals perish in the flood,
The small remainder dies for want of food.

A mountain of stupendous height there stands
Betwixt th' Athenian and Boeotian lands.
The bound of fruitful fields, while fields they were,
But then a field of waters did appear:

Parnassus is its name; whose forky rise
Mounts through the clouds, and mates the lofty skies.
High on the summit of this dubious cliff,
Deucalion wafting moor'd his little skiff.
He with his wife were only left behind
Of perish'd man; they two were human-kind.
The mountain-nymphs and Themis they adore,
And from her oracles relief implore.
The most upright of mortal men was he;
The most sincere and holy woman, she.

When Jupiter, surveying earth from high,
Beheld it in a lake of water lie,
That, where so many millions lately liv'd,
But two, the best of either sex, surviv'd,
He loos'd the northern wind; fierce Boreas flies
To puff away the clouds, and purge the skies:
Serenely, while he blows, the vapours driven
Discover heaven to earth, and earth to heaven.
The billows fall, while Neptune lays his mace
On the rough sea, and smooths its furrow'd face.
Already Triton, at his call, appears
Above the waves: a Tyrian robe he wears;
And in his hand a crooked trumpet bears.
The sovereign bids him peaceful sounds inspire,
And give the waves the signal to retire.
His writhen shell he takes, whose narrow vent
Grows by degrees into a large extent;
Then gives it breath; the blast, with doubling sound,
Runs the wide circuit of the world around.

The

The sun first heard it, in his early East,
 And met the rattling echos in the West.
 The waters, listening to the trumpet's roar,
 Obey the summons, and forsake the shore.

A thin circumference of land appears;
 And earth, but not at once, her visage rears,
 And peeps upon the seas from upper grounds:
 The streams, but just contain'd within their bounds,
 By slow degrees into their channels crawl;
 And earth increases as the waters fall.
 In longer time the tops of trees appear,
 Which mud on their dishonour'd branches bear.

At length the world was all restor'd to view,
 But desolate, and of a sickly hue:
 Nature beheld herself, and stood aghast,
 A dismal desert, and a silent waste.

Which when Deucalion, with a piteous look,
 Beheld, he wept, and thus to Pyrrha spoke:
 Oh wife, oh sister, oh of all thy kind
 The best and only creature left behind,
 By kindred, love, and now by dangers, join'd;
 Of multitudes, who breath'd the common air,
 We two remain; a species in a pair:
 The rest the seas have swallow'd; nor have we
 Ev'n of this wretched life a certainty.
 The clouds are still above; and, while I speak,
 A second deluge o'er our heads may break.
 Should I be snatch'd from hence, and thou remain,
 Without relief, or partner of thy pain,
 How could'st thou such a wretched life sustain?

Should

Should I be left, and thou be lost, the sea,
That bury'd her I lov'd, should bury me.
Oh could our father his old arts inspire,
And make me heir of his informing fire,
That so I might abolish'd man retrieve,
And perish'd people in new souls might live!
But Heaven is pleas'd, nor ought we to complain,
That we, th' examples of mankind, remain.
He said: the careful couple join their tears,
And then invoke the Gods with pious prayers.
Thus in devotion having eas'd their grief,
From sacred oracles they seek relief:
And to Cephissus' brook their way pursue:
The stream was troubled, but the ford they knew.
With living waters in the fountain bred,
They sprinkle first their garments and their head,
Then took the way which to the temple led. }
The roofs were all defil'd with moss and mire,
The desert altars void of solemn fire.
Before the gradual prostrate they ador'd,
The pavement kiss'd; and thus the faint implor'd.
O righteous Themis, if the powers above
By prayers are bent to pity, and to love;
If human miseries can move their mind;
If yet they can forgive, and yet be kind;
Tell how we may restore, by second birth,
Mankind, and people desolated earth.
Then thus the gracious Goddess, nodding, said;
Depart, and with your vestments veil your head:

And

And stooping lowly down, with loosen'd zones,
Throw each behind your backs your mighty mother's
bones.

Amaz'd the pair, and mute with wonder, stand,
Till Pyrrha first refus'd the dire command.
Forbid it heaven, said she, that I should tear
Those holy relics from the sepulchre.
They ponder'd the mysterious words again,
For some new sense; and long they sought in vain.
At length Deucalion clear'd his cloudy brow,
And said, The dark ænigma will allow
A meaning; which if well I understand,
From sacrilege will free the God's command;
This earth our mighty mother is, the stones
In her capacious body are her bones:
These we must cast behind. With hope, and fear,
The woman did the new solution hear:
The man diffides in his own augury,
And doubts the Gods; yet both resolve to try.
Descending from the mount, they first unbind
Their vests, and veil'd they cast the stones behind:
The stones (a miracle to mortal view,
But long tradition makes it pass for true)
Did first the rigour of their kind expel,
And suppl'd into softness as they fell:
Then swell'd, and swelling by degrees grew warm;
And took the rudiments of human form;
Imperfect shapes, in marble such are seen,
When the rude chizzel does the man begin;
While yet the roughness of the stone remains,
Without the rising muscles and the veins.

The

The fappy parts, and next refembling juice,
Were turn'd to moiſture, for the body's uſe:
Supplying humours, blood, and nourifhment:
The reſt, too ſolid to receive a bent,
Converts to bones; and what was once a vein,
Its former name and nature did retain.
By help of power divine, in little ſpace,
What the man threw aſſum'd a manly face;
And what the wife, renew'd the female race.
Hence we derive our nature, born to bear
Laborious life, and harden'd into care.

The reſt of animals, from teeming earth
Produc'd, in various forms receiv'd their birth.
The native moiſture, in its cloſe retreat,
Digefted by the ſun's ætherial heat,
As in a kindly womb, began to breed:
Then ſwell'd, and quicken'd by the vital feed.
And ſome in leſs, and ſome in longer ſpace,
Were ripen'd into form, and took a ſeveral face.
Thus when the Nile from Pharian fields is fled,
And ſeeks with ebbing tides his ancient bed,
The fat manure with heavenly fire is warm'd;
And cruſted creatures, as in wombs, are form'd:
Theſe, when they turn the glebe, the peaſants find:
Some rude, and yet unfiniſh'd in their kind:
Short of their limbs, a lame imperfect birth;
One half alive, and one of lifeleſs earth.

For heat and moiſture when in bodies join'd,
The temper that reſults from either kind

Conception

Conception makes; and fighting, till they mix,
 Their mingled atoms in each other fix.
 Thus nature's hand the genial bed prepares
 With friendly discord, and with fruitful wars.

From hence the surface of the ground with mud
 And slime besmear'd (the fæces of the flood)
 Receiv'd the rays of heaven; and, sucking in
 The seeds of heat, new creatures did begin:
 Some were of several sorts produc'd before;
 But of new monsters earth created more.

Unwillingly, but yet she brought to light
 Thee, Python too, the wondering world to fright,
 And the new nations, with so dire a fight. }
 So monstrous was his bulk, so large a space
 Did his vast body and long train embrace:
 Whom Phœbus basking on a bank espy'd,
 Ere now the God his arrows had not try'd,
 But on the trembling deer, or mountain-goat;
 At this new quarry he prepares to shoot.
 Though every shaft took place, he spent the store }
 Of his full quiver; and 'twas long before
 Th' expiring serpent wallow'd in his gore.
 Then, to preserve the fame of such a deed,
 For Python slain, he Pythian games decreed,
 Where noble youths for mastership should strive,
 To quoit, to run, and steeds and chariots drive.
 The prize was fame, in witness of renown,
 An oaken garland did the victor crown.
 The laurel was not yet for triumphs born;
 But every green alike by Phœbus worn }
 Did, with promiscuous grace, his flowing locks adorn.

THE

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DAPHNE
INTO A LAUREL.

THE first and fairest of his loves was she
Whom not blind fortune, but the dire decree
Of angry Cupid forc'd him to desire:
Daphne her name, and Peneus was her fire.
Swell'd with the pride that new success attends,
He sees the stripling, while his bow he bends,
And thus insults him: Thou lascivious boy,
Are arms like these for children to employ?
Know, such achievements are my proper claim;
Due to my vigour and unerring aim:
Resistless are my shafts; and Python late,
In such a feather'd death, has found his fate.
Take up thy torch, and lay my weapons by;
With that the feeble souls of lovers fry.
To whom the son of Venus thus reply'd:
Phœbus, thy shafts are sure on all beside;
But mine on Phœbus: mine the fame shall be
Of all thy conquests, when I conquer thee.

He said, and soaring swiftly wing'd his flight;
Nor stopt but on Parnassus' airy height.
Two different shafts he from his quiver draws;
One to repel desire, and one to cause.
One shaft is pointed with refulgent gold,
To bribe the love, and make the lover bold:
One blunt, and tipped with lead, whose base allay
Provokes disdain, and drives desire away.

The

The blunted bolt against the nymph he dress:
But with the sharp transfix'd Apollo's breast.

Th' enamour'd Deity pursues the chase;
The scornful damsel shuns his loath'd embrace:
In hunting beasts of prey her youth employs;
And Phœbe rivals in her rural joys.
With naked neck she goes, and shoulders bare
And with a fillet binds her flowing hair.
By many suitors fought, she mocks their pains,
And still her vow'd virginity maintains.
Impatient of a yoke, the name of bride
She shuns, and hates the joys she never try'd.
On wilds and wood she fixes her desire:
Nor knows what youth and kindly love inspire.
Her father chides her oft: Thou ow'st, says he,
A husband to thyself, a son to me.
She, like a crime, abhors the nuptial bed:
She glows with blushes, and she hangs her head.
Then, casting round his neck her tender arms,
Soothes him with blandishments and filial charms:
Give me, my lord, she said, to lie, and die,
A spotless maid, without the marriage-tie.
'Tis but a small request; I beg no more
Than what Diana's father gave before.
The good old sire was soften'd to consent;
But said, her wish would prove her punishment:
For so much youth, and so much beauty join'd,
Oppos'd the state, which her desires design'd.

The God of light, aspiring to her bed,
Hopes what he seeks, with flattering fancies fed;
And is by his own oracles misled.

}
And

And as in empty fields the stubble burns,
 Or nightly travellers, when day returns,
 Their useleſs torches on dry hedges throw,
 That catch the flames, and kindle all the row;
 So burns the God, conſuming in deſire,
 And feeding in his breſt the fruitleſs fire:
 Her well-turn'd neck he view'd (her neck was bare)
 And on her ſhoulders her diſhevel'd hair:
 Oh, were it comb'd, ſaid he, with what a grace
 Would every waving curl become her face!
 He view'd her eyes, like heavenly lamps that ſhone!
 He view'd her lips, too ſweet to view alone,
 Her taper fingers, and her panting breſt;
 He praiſes all he ſees, and for the reſt
 Believes the beauties yet unſeen are beſt. }
 Swift as the wind, the damſel fled away,
 Nor did for theſe alluring ſpeeches ſtay:
 Stay, nymph, he cry'd, I follow, not a foe:
 Thus from the Lion trips the trembling Doe;
 Thus from the Wolf the frighten'd Lamb removes, }
 And from purſuing Falcons fearful Doves;
 Thou ſhunn'ſt a God, and ſhunn'ſt a God, that loves. }
 Ah, leſt ſome thorn ſhould pierce thy tender foot,
 Or thou ſhould'ſt fall in flying my purſuit!
 To ſharp uneven ways thy ſteps decline;
 Abate thy ſpeed, and I will bate of mine.
 Yet think from whom thou doſt ſo raſhly fly;
 Nor baſely born, nor ſhepherd's ſwain am I.
 Perhaps thou know'ſt not my ſuperior ſtate;
 And from that ignorance proceeds thy hate,

Me Claros, Delphos, Tenedos obey;
 These hands the Patareian sceptre sway.
 The king of Gods begot me: what shall be,
 Or is, or ever was, in fate, I see.
 Mine is th' invention of the charming lyre;
 Sweet notes and heavenly numbers I inspire.
 Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart;
 But 'ah! more deadly his, who pierc'd my heart.
 Medicine is mine, what herbs and simples grow
 In fields and forests, all their powers I know;
 And am the great physician call'd below.
 Alas, that fields and forests can afford
 No remedies to heal their love-sick lord!
 To cure the pains of love, no plant avails;
 And his own phyfic the physician fails.

She heard not half, so furiously she flies,
 And on her ear th' imperfect accent dies.
 Fear gave her wings; and as she fled, the wind
 Increasing spread her flowing hair behind;
 And left her legs and thighs expos'd to view;
 Which made the God more eager to pursue.
 The God was young, and was too hotly bent
 To lose his time in empty compliment:
 But, led by love, and fir'd by such a sight,
 Impetuously pursued his near delight.

As when th' impatient greyhound, slipt from far,
 Bounds o'er the glebe, to course the fearful hare,
 She in her speed does all her safety lay;
 And he with double speed pursues the prey;

O'er-runs her at the fitting turn, and licks
 His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flix:
 She scapes, and for the neighbouring covert strives,
 And, gaining shelter, doubts if yet she lives:
 If little things with great we may compare,
 Such was the God, and such the flying fair:
 She, urg'd by fear, her feet did swiftly move;
 But he more swiftly, who was urg'd by love.
 He gathers ground upon her in the chace:
 Now breathes upon her hair, with nearer pace;
 And just is fastening on the wish'd embrace. }
 The nymph grew pale, and in a mortal fright,
 Spent with the labour of so long a flight;
 And now despairing cast a mournful look,
 Upon the streams of her paternal brook:
 Oh, help, she cry'd, in this extremest need,
 If Water-Gods are Deities indeed:
 Gape, earth, and this unhappy wretch intomb:
 Or change my form whence all my sorrows come.
 Scarce had she finish'd, when her feet she found
 Benumb'd with cold, and fasten'd to the ground:
 A filmy rind about her body grows,
 Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs:
 The nymph is all into a laurel gone,
 The smoothness of her skin remains alone.
 Yet Phœbus loves her still, and, casting round
 Her bole, his arms, some little warmth he found.
 The tree still panted in th' unfinish'd part,
 Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her heart.

He

He fix'd his lips upon the trembling rind;
 It swerv'd aside, and his embrace declin'd.
 To whom the God: Because thou canst not be
 My mistress, I espouse thee for my tree;
 Be thou the prize of honour and renown;
 The deathless poet, and the poem, crown.
 Thou shalt the Roman festivals adorn,
 And, after poets, be by victors worn.
 Thou shalt returning Cæsar's triumph grace;
 When poms shall in a long procession pass:
 Wreath'd on the post before his palace wait;
 And be the sacred guardian of the gate:
 Secure from thunder, and unharm'd by Jove,
 Unfading as th' immortal powers above:
 And as the locks of Phœbus are unshorn,
 So shall perpetual green thy boughs adorn.
 The grateful tree was pleas'd with what he said,
 And shook the shady honours of her head.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF IO INTO AN HEIFER.

An ancient forest in Thessalia grows;
 Which Tempe's pleasant valley does inclose;
 Through this the rapid Peneus takes his course;
 From Pindus rolling with impetuous force:
 Mists from the river's mighty fall arise;
 And deadly damps inclose the cloudy skies:
 Perpetual fogs are hanging o'er the wood;
 And sounds of waters deaf the neighbourhood,
Y 2
Deep,

Deep, in a rocky cave, he makes abode:
A mansion proper for a mourning God.
Here he gives audience; issuing out decrees
To rivers, his dependent Deities.
On this occasion hither they resort,
To pay their homage, and to make their court,
All doubtful, whether to congratulate
His daughter's honour, or lament her fate.
Sperchæus, crown'd with poplar, first appears;
Then old Apidanus came crown'd with years:
Enipeus turbulent, Amphryfos tame;
And Æas last with lagging waters came.
Then of his kindred brooks a numerous throng
Condole his loss, and bring their urns along.
Not one was wanting of the watery train,
That fill'd his flood, or mingled with the main,
But Inachus, who, in his cave alone,
Wept not another's losses, but his own;
For his dear Io, whether stray'd or dead,
To him uncertain, doubtful tears he shed.
He sought her through the world, but sought in vain;
And, no where finding, rather fear'd her slain.

Her just returning from her father's brook,
Jove had beheld with a desiring look;
And, oh, fair daughter of the flood, he said,
Worthy alone of Jove's imperial bed,
Happy whoever shall those charms possess!
The king of Gods (nor is thy lover less)
Invites thee to yon cooler shades, to shun
The scorching rays of the meridian sun.

Nor

Nor shalt thou tempt the dangers of the grove
 Alone without a guide; thy guide is Jove.
 No puny power, but he, whose high command
 Is unconfin'd, who rules the seas and land,
 And tempers thunder in his awful hand. }
 Oh, fly not (for she fled from his embrace
 Q'er Lerna's pastures): he pursued the chace
 Along the shades of the Lyrcæan plain;
 At length the God who never asks in vain,
 Involv'd with vapours, imitating night,
 Both air and earth; and then suppress'd her flight,
 And, mingling force with love, enjoy'd the full delight. }
 Mean-time the jealous Juno, from on high
 Survey'd the fruitful fields of Arcady;
 And wonder'd that the mist should over-run
 The face of day-light, and obscure the sun.
 No natural cause she found, from brooks or hogs,
 Or marshy lowlands to produce the fogs:
 Then round the skies she sought for Jupiter,
 Her faithless husband; but no Jove was there.
 Suspecting now the worst, Or I, she said,
 Am much mistaken, or am much betray'd.
 With fury she precipitates her flight;
 Dispels the shadows of dissembled night,
 And to the day restores his native light. }
 Th' almighty leacher, careful to prevent
 The consequence, foreseeing her descent,
 Transforms his mistress in a trice: and now
 In Io's place appears a lovely cow.

So sleek her skin, so faultless was her make,
 Ev'n Juno did unwilling pleasure take
 To see so fair a rival of her love;
 And what she was, and whence, enquir'd of Jove:
 Of what fair herd, and from what pedigree?
 The God half-caught was forc'd upon a lie;
 And said, she sprung from earth. She took the word,
 And begg'd the beauteous heifer of her lord.
 What should he do? 'twas equal shame to Jove,
 Or to relinquish, or betray his love:
 Yet to refuse so slight a gift, would be
 But more t' increase his consort's jealousy:
 Thus fear, and love, by turns his heart assail'd;
 And stronger love had sure at length prevail'd;
 But some faint hope remain'd, his jealous queen
 Had not the mistress through the heifer seen.
 The cautious Goddess of her gift possess'd,
 Yet harbour'd anxious thoughts within her breast;
 As she who knew the falsehood of her Jove,
 And justly fear'd some new relapse of love.
 Which to prevent, and to secure her care,
 To trusty Argus she commits the fair.

The head of Argus (as with stars the skies)
 Was compass'd round, and wore an hundred eyes.
 But two by turns their lids in slumber steep;
 The rest on duty still their station keep;
 Nor could the total constellation sleep.
 Thus, ever present, to his eyes and mind,
 His charge was still before him, though behind,

In

In fields he suffer'd her to feed by day;
 But, when the setting sun to night gave way,
 The captive cow he summon'd with a call,
 And drove her back, and ty'd her to the stall.
 On leaves of trees and bitter herbs she fed,
 Heaven was her canopy, bare earth her bed;
 So hardly lodg'd: and to digest her food,
 She drank from troubled streams defil'd with mud.
 Her woful story fain she would have told,
 With hands upheld, but had no hands to hold.
 Her head to her ungentle keeper bow'd,
 She strove to speak; she spoke not, but she low'd.
 Affrighted with the noise, she look'd around,
 And seem'd t' inquire the author of the sound.

Once on the banks where often she had play'd
 (Her father's banks) she came, and there survey'd
 Her alter'd visage, and her branching head;
 And starting from herself she would have fled.
 Her fellow-nymphs, familiar to her eyes,
 Beheld, but knew her not in this disguise.
 Ev'n Inachus himself was ignorant;
 And in his daughter did his daughter want.
 She follow'd where her fellows went, as she
 Were still a partner of the company:
 They stroke her neck; the gentle heifer stands,
 And her neck offers to their stroking hands:
 Her father gave her grass; the grass she took;
 And lick'd his palms, and cast a piteous look;
 And in the language of her eyes she spoke,

She would have told her name, and ask'd relief,
But, wanting words, in tears she tells her grief.
Which with her foot she makes him understand;
And prints the name of Io in the sand,
Ah wretched me! her mournful father cry'd;
She with a sigh to *wretched* me reply'd:
About her milk-white neck his arms he threw;
And wept, and then these tender words ensue:
And art thou she, whom I have sought around
The world, and have at length so sadly found?
So found, is worse than lost: with mutual words
Thou answer'st not, no voice thy tongue affords;
But sighs are deeply drawn from out thy breast;
And speech deny'd by lowing is express'd.
Unknowing, I prepar'd thy bridal bed;
With empty hopes of happy issue fed.
But now the husband of a herd must be
Thy mate, and bellowing sons thy progeny.
Oh, were I mortal, death might bring relief!
But now my God-head but extends my grief;
Prolongs my woes, of which no end I see,
And makes me curse my immortality.
More had he said, but, fearful of her stay,
The starry guardian drove his charge away
To some fresh pasture; on a hilly height
He fate himself, and kept her still in sight.

THE EYES OF ARGUS TRANSFORMED INTO A PEACOCK'S TRAIN.

Now Jove no longer could her sufferings bear:
 But call'd in haste his airy messenger,
 The son of Maia, with severe decree
 To kill the keeper, and to set her free.
 With all his harness soon the God was sped;
 His flying hat was fasten'd on his head;
 Wings on his heels were hung, and in his hand
 He holds the virtue of the snaky wand.
 The liquid air his moving pinions wound,
 And, in the moment, shoot him on the ground.
 Before he came in sight, the crafty God
 His wings dismiss'd, but still retain'd his rod:
 That sleep-procuring wand wise Hermes took,
 But made it seem to fight a shepherd's hook.
 With this he did a herd of goats control;
 Which by the way he met, and slyly stole.
 Clad like a country swain, he pip'd, and fung;
 And playing drove his jolly troop along.

With pleasure Argus the musician heeds;
 But wonders much at those new vocal reeds.
 And who's'er thou art, my friend, said he,
 Up hither drive thy goats, and play by me:
 This hill has brouze for them, and shade for thee.
 The God, who was with ease induc'd to climb,
 Began discourse to pass away the time;
 And still betwixt his tuneful pipe he plies:
 And watch'd his hour, to close the keeper's eyes.

With

With much ado, he partly kept awake;
 Not suffering all his eyes repose to take:
 And ask'd the stranger, who did reeds invent,
 And whence became so rare an instrument.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SYRINX INTO REEDS.

Then Hermes thus; a nymph of late there was,
 Whose heavenly form her fellows did surpass.
 The pride and joy of fair Arcadia's plains;
 Belov'd by Deities, ador'd by swains:
 Syrinx her name, by Sylvans oft pursu'd,
 As oft she did the lustful Gods delude:
 The rural and the wood-land powers disdain'd;
 With Cynthia hunted, and her rites maintain'd;
 Like Phœbe clad, ev'n Phœbe's self she seems,
 So tall, so straight, such well-proportion'd limbs:
 The nicest eye did no distinction know,
 But that the Goddess bore a golden bow:
 Distinguish'd thus, the sight she cheated too. }
 Descending from Lycæus, Pan admires
 The matchless nymph, and burns with new desires.
 A crown of pine upon his head he wore;
 And thus began her pity to implore.
 But, ere he thus began, she took her flight
 So swift, she was already out of sight.
 Nor stay'd to hear the courtship of the God;
 But beat her course to Ladon's gentle flood:
 There by the river stopt, and tir'd before,
 Relief from water-nymphs her prayers implore.

Now

Now while the lustful God, with speedy pace,
Just thought to strain her in a strict embrace,
He fills his arms with reeds, new rising on the place.
And while he sighs his ill success to find,
The tender canes were shaken by the wind;
And breath'd a mournful air, unheard before;
That, much surprizing Pan, yet pleas'd him more.
Admiring this new music, Thou, he said,
Who canst not be the partner of my bed,
At least shalt be the consort of my mind;
And often, often, to my lips be join'd.
He form'd the reeds, proportion'd as they are:
Unequal in their length, and wax'd with care,
They still retain the name of his ungrateful fair.

While Hermes pip'd, and sung, and told his tale,
The keeper's winking eyes began to fail,
And drowsy slumber on the lids to creep;
Till all the watchman was at length asleep.
Then soon the God his voice and song suppress;
And with his powerful rod confirm'd his rest:
Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
And at one fatal stroke the keeper slew.
Down from the rock fell the dissever'd head,
Opening its eyes in death, and falling bled;
And mark'd the passage with a crimson trail:
Thus Argus lies in pieces, cold and pale;
And all his hundred eyes, with all their light,
Are clos'd at once, in one perpetual night.
These Juno takes, that they no more may fail,
And spreads them in her peacock's gaudy tail.

Impatient

Impatient to revenge her injur'd bed,
She wreaks her anger on her rival's head;
With furies frights her from her native home,
And drives her gadding round the world to roam:
Nor ceas'd her madness and her flight, before
She touch'd the limits of the Pharian shore.
At length, arriving on the banks of Nile,
Wearied with length of ways, and worn with toil,
She laid her down: and, leaning on her knees,
Invok'd the cause of all her miseries:
And cast her languishing regards above,
For help from heaven, and her ungrateful Jove.
She sigh'd, she wept, she low'd; 'twas all she could;
And with unkindness seem'd to tax the God.
Last, with an humble prayer, she begg'd repose,
Or death at least to finish all her woes.
Jove heard her vows, and, with a flattering look,
In her behalf to jealous Juno spoke.
He cast his arms about her neck, and said:
Dame, rest secure; no more thy nuptial bed
This nymph shall violate; by Styx I swear,
And every oath that binds the Thunderer.
The Goddess was appeas'd: and at the word
Was lo to her former shape restor'd.
The rugged hair began to fall away;
The sweetness of her eyes did only stay,
Though not so large; her crooked horns decrease;
The wideness of her jaws and nostrils cease:
Her hoofs to hands return, in little space;
The five long taper fingers take their place;

And

And nothing of the heifer now is seen,
Beside the native whiteness of her skin.
Erected on her feet she walks again,
And two the duty of the four sustain.
She tries her tongue, her silence softly breaks,
And fears her former lowings when she speaks:
A Goddess now through all th' Egyptian state;
And serv'd by priests, who in white linen wait.

Her son was Epaphus, at length believ'd
The son of Jove, and as a God receiv'd.
With sacrifice ador'd, and public prayers,
He common temples with his mother shares.
Equal in years, and rival in renown
With Epaphus, the youthful Phaëton,
Like honour claims, and boasts his sire the sun.
His haughty looks, and his assuming air,
The son of Isis could no longer bear:
Thou tak'st thy mother's word too far, said he,
And hast usurp'd thy boasted pedigree.
Go, base pretender to a borrow'd name!
Thus tax'd, he blush'd with anger, and with shame;
But shame repress'd his rage: the daunted youth
Soon seeks his mother, and enquires the truth:
Mother, said he, this infamy was thrown
By Epaphus on you, and me your son.
He spoke in public, told it to my face;
Nor durst I vindicate the dire disgrace:
Ev'n I, the bold, the sensible of wrong,
Restrain'd by shame, was forc'd to hold my tongue.
To hear an open slander, is a curse:
But not to find an answer, is a worse.

If

If I am heaven-begot, assert your son
 By some sure sign; and make my father known,
 To right my honour, and redeem your own.
 He said, and saying cast his arms about
 Her neck, and begg'd her to resolve the doubt.

'Tis hard to judge if Clymene were mov'd
 More by his prayer, whom she so dearly lov'd,
 Or more with fury fir'd, to find her name
 Traduc'd, and made the sport of common fame.
 She stretch'd her arms to heaven, and fix'd her eyes
 On that fair planet that adorns the skies;
 Now by those beams, said she, whose holy fires
 Consume my breast, and kindle my desires;
 By him who sees us both, and cheers our fight,
 By him, the public minister of light,
 I swear that Sun begot thee: if I lye,
 Let him his chearful influence deny:
 Let him no more this perjur'd creature see,
 And shine on all the world but only me.
 If still you doubt your mother's innocence,
 His eastern mansion is not far from hence;
 With little pains you to his levee go,
 And from himself your parentage may know.
 With joy th' ambitious youth his mother heard,
 And eager for the journey soon prepar'd.
 He longs the world beneath him to survey;
 To guide the chariot, and to give the day:
 From Meroë's burning sands he bends his course,
 Nor less in India feels his father's force;
 His travel urging, till he came in sight,
 And saw the palace by the purple light.

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